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The Week

PRESIDENT Roosevelt's address to the peoples of the world urging disarmament and non-aggression is important, not for its content, but as a carefully timed, dramatic gesture of warning. The argument for the limitation and eventual abandonment of aggressive weapons is not new; it was already embodied in the MacDonald program, to which the United States has adhered. One could contend logically that it is impossible to distinguish offensive from defensive armament, or that industrial capacity to create instruments of war is of far greater importance than the actual possession of these instruments at any one time. One could also point out that a new non-aggression pact would not be of much use when the nations have already agreed to others, which have been violated with impunity. Nevertheless, the important thing is the intention behind the formulas. Almost any formula is good so long as it is universally accepted and actually leads in the direction of less preparation for war and less fear of it. The present situation is acute mainly because one Great Power in the West is suspected of having dangerous intentions, of wanting to increase armament, of being reluctant to agree. The phrase of outstanding significance in the speech is the statement that in the event of failure at Geneva and London, "the civilized world . . . will know where the responsibility for failure lies." In view of the accord among France, Great Britain and the United States, can anyone doubt that this is intended to influence the action of the Nazi government?

DOES what has happened to wholesale prices and production in the past few weeks constitute the beginning of a real business recovery, or does it not? The more an economist knows, the less likely would he be to want to stake his reputation on a prediction. There is solid ground for a rise in the price of wheat on account of a short winter crop and the prospect of a small spring crop. That was a lucky accident for the farmers who have wheat to sell, and may bring some new purchasing power into markets for goods. But normally, there is some increased activity in the spring, and consequently too much stress should not be placed on the general improvement. Greater confidence in the banking situation after the moratorium was likely to have a good effect of a lasting nature—lasting, at least, unless people begin to suspect banks again. On the other hand, the shrinkage of business while the banks were closed was certain to be followed by a spurt afterwards, which may soon wear itself out in view of the fact that the total of deposits is still billions smaller than it was at the end of February. People expecting inflation are discounting it in a speculative way—and this may apply not merely to professional speculators but to business men and individual consumers buying goods. Such a speculative movement may soon die down, or it may start something bigger. Above all, governmental measures of many sorts have still to be put into effect. Some believe that unless these are vigorously administered, there can be no lasting improvement: others, that we were already started on a promising upswing which governmental action can only hinder. The best one can say is that now for the first time since the start of the depression there seems to be a reason for hope to counterbalance every one for despair.

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THE President's appointment of George N. Peek as administrator of the Farm Bill, coupled with his instructions to the Department of Agriculture not to go ahead with the crop-restriction and excise-tax parts of the law on account of the tariff truce, look as if he were prepared to cut out the heart of the agricultural program. Mr. Peek was the leader of the movement for the McNary-Haugen bill, which was justly criticized by almost all economists on the ground that it aimed to sustain prices without curbing the increased output which the sustained prices would probably call forth. He is understood still to be in favor of fixing prices by decree without doing anything about the supply, which is the most important factor in making any price possible. The President's order not to make any arrangements to restrict output, or to collect the taxes which are to furnish the funds to be paid to the farmers for doing so, allows Mr. Peek to go ahead with his price-fixing idea, while preventing others in the Department from executing theirs. If the rise of agricultural prices this spring is sustained throughout the summer, this delay may have no immediate deleterious effect, but unless some sort of planned production can be put into operation before next fall's wheat planting, the plight of American agriculture will not have been relieved one iota by the passage of the much heralded farm bill.

ALTHOUGH as we go to press Chancellor Hitler has not yet delivered his anxiously awaited speech before the Reichstag, it is not difficult to forecast its content from the address delivered by Vice-Chancellor von Papen at a Steel Helmet meeting in Münster. His insistence on arms equality for Germany, the contemptuous tone in which he referred to the League of Nations and its threat that sanctions would be restored and, finally, his slurring reference to the pacifists "who love their lives more than the honor of their country," permit but one interpretation. Every advance indication pointed to a blustering, saber-rattling appeal to the galleries in Germany, for the German people demand action on the arms-equality issue and Hitler must make good. He will not do so with a light heart, for he is well aware of the odds against him. Von Papen's and Göring's trips to Rome were even more unsuccessful than was at first suspected. They failed to obtain the coöperation of Premier Mussolini on the Austrian Anschluss question and could come to no understanding on the Versailles Treaty issue.

THE savagery with which the German rulers are crushing all opposition within the Reich has convinced Europe, and above all traditionally democratic England, that the Hitler movement and the forces of darkness it has unleashed are a permanent menace to world peace. The British Conservatives have no love for their own Laborites, but they abhor the ruthless confiscation of the millions in property and money owned by Germany's workers and the brutal suppression of the Jewish, Socialist and Communist elements in the Reich. That Hitler should have been able to take these labor and socialist movements so completely by surprise is indicative of the unrealistic attitude the German Socialists have persisted in adopting toward the Fascist regime. They should have understood that no dictatorship can tolerate so large an opposition group, whether it is political or economic. It is true that on February 20 the Cabinet, in deference to the insistence of Hugenberg, decided to proceed against the Communist party only in case of some overt act, and to permit the Social Democratic party to function and to send its representatives to all governmental bodies. But there is no such word as can't in the lexicon of Fascist politics. The Reichstag fire furnished the pretext for outlawing the Communist party, thus giving the National Socialists the absolute majority in the Reichstag which they needed to meet the eventual combination of Centrist and Social Democratic forces in that body. A similar background was staged for the confiscation of the property of the Socialist party. Five days after the raids on the trade unions, the government announced that its accountants had discovered evidence of such widespread corruption on the part of Socialist officials that the government was forced to expropriate all property in the hands of the Socialist party to safeguard the interests of the German workers.

BY MANEUVERS less crude but no less effective, the National Socialist rulers of Germany are attempting to destroy any possibility of a united political opposition. Hugenberg, who accepted his post in the Cabinet with the proviso that he be given charge of both agriculture and commerce, is becoming restive under the encroachments of his opponents. The Prussian Ministry for Agriculture has already been given to a Nazi adherent and peasants from all parts of the Reich are reported to be demanding Hugenberg's dismissal. The convention of the German Nationalist People's party, held a few weeks ago, and articles in the Hugenberg press direct attention to a deep dissatisfaction in Nationalist ranks. It is by no means unthinkable that the German Nationalists may unite with the Centrist party—which, in Dr. Brüning, has chosen as its head an outspoken anti-Hitlerite—and with the Social Democracy, to form a strong minority which might conceivably challenge Hitler's dictatorship. Under these circumstances, the outlawing of the Social Democratic party becomes a measure of self-preservation.

THE securities bill passed by the House of Representatives and known as the Rayburn Bill is apparently to have the support of the administration. The original securities bill introduced into the Senate was promptly pounced upon by the newspaper men, with their love of labels, and baptized "the Pitiless Publicity Bill." The publicity it proposed,

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however, was more pitiful than pitiless. The whole measure was loosely drawn and entirely inadequate. The new bill introduced into the House by Mr. Rayburn is an immense improvement and bears the marks of expert craftsmanship. However, the subject is so complicated that final judgment on its value must await a more careful study of its provisions than time has thus far permitted.

THE Continental Congress for Economic Reconstruction which met in Washington a week ago had more than 3,000 delegates, from forty-one states. It discussed a wide variety of topics, and adopted a long list of resolutions, including demands for $3,000 million for direct federal relief, to be paid in cash to the unemployed; $6,000 million for public works; public ownership and operation of transportation and communication systems, public utilities, natural resources and basic industries; confiscation of all incomes in excess of $25,000 yearly; high inheritance taxes and a capital levy; a new national banking system, beginning with a reorganization of the postal savings banks; government old-age, sickness and unemployment insurance; immediate cash payment of the bonus; the six-hour day and five-day week, and a general moratorium on mortgages with reduction of interest rates. A continuing committee was appointed to work for the next meeting, a year hence, and to draft "a new Declaration of Independence."

THE Congress was in the control of the Socialists, who smothered several efforts from the floor to obtain endorsement for an immediate and complete "united front" with the Communists; but the permanent committee, known as the Continental Congress of Farmers and Workers, will seek to work out a basis for limited coöperation between the two groups, for limited objectives. However much one may think that coöperation of all radical groups is desirable, it is easy to understand the reluctance of the Socialists to join hands with the Communists, who for years have been damning them up, down and across, and have had their sudden change of heart only on orders from Moscow, which were primarily intended to apply to the situation in Germany. Much comment was heard, in the Congress, on the fine spirit of the farmers present, who represented no paper organizations, but spoke for large numbers of their fellows, rendered desperate by their economic plight.

MRS. Gifford Pinchot, wife of the Governor of Pennsylvania, has recently paraded with youthful strikers in shirt factories in the Lehigh Valley, and by doing so she has succeeded in attracting national attention to the plight of these young workers. Though conditions in Pennsylvania are not substantially worse than they are in other places, they are certainly bad enough. Children of fourteen or fifteen are working full time, in hundreds of cases for $2 or $3 a week, and in practically no case are they receiving more than $5 or $6. They are forced to accept these less than starvation wages because in many instances all the adult breadwinners in their families are unemployed, and there are cases where these children, going on strike to end intolerable conditions, have been beaten by their parents and forced to go back to work. Local police have also been turned out in large numbers by city officials, who as usual conspire with the mill owners against the workers, and have intimidated some of the strikers into going back, while in certain cities the school authorities have been utilized as strike-breakers, threatening to force the strikers of school age to go back to work, return to the classroom or suffer arrest. The publicity Mrs. Pinchot has been able to obtain—the newsreels, with unusual courage, having photographed her making a brief speech about the appalling conditions she has found—may do some good temporarily; but in the long run there is only one way to get decent conditions in time of depression. That is, of course, through an adequate law, state or federal, adequately enforced.

THE Illinois State Senate has passed a bill which is strangely reminiscent of the old radical-baiting days just after the War. It orders action against any educational institution which teaches "sedition or armed revolt." "Sedition" and "armed revolt" are exceedingly vague terms and capable of the broadest interpretation. Under this bill, for instance, it might be illegal to teach the history of the American Revolution. If a guilty institution is in receipt of state funds, these are to be withdrawn; if it is privately supported, its property is to be taxed as though it were an ordinary commercial enterprise. In either case, of course, the result would be ruin to the institution, and that is the purpose of the bill. If it becomes law, it will permit the police to enter every classroom and attempt to blackmail the instructors into teaching only the officially approved doctrines. Illinois is not only distinguished for state and (in Chicago) city politics which are rotten through and through, but for being a stronghold of black reaction. Chicago is the chief center of American Fascism, and it is easy to see the hand of the Illinois Blackshirts behind this measure. We hope that the Illinois lower house will have courage and sense enough to reject the proposal, or if it does not, that the Governor—who, as a Jew, ought to know something of the meaning of tyrannical censorship—will veto the measure.

A GOOD many American radio listeners will be turning wistful eyes toward Canada as soon as the new regulations of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission become more generally known. The Commission has just issued a rule that advertising shall occupy only 5 percent of the broadcast time of any radio station. "Spot announcements"—brief selling messages given between programs—are en-

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tirely forbidden from 7:30 until 11 p. m., and at all other times shall not be longer than a hundred words each, or take more than three minutes in any hour of broadcasting. Electrically recorded programs, especially prepared for broadcasting, must not be given more than once from each station. News bulletins for broadcasting will be regularly furnished by the Canadian Press Association, and local news may be provided under special arrangements with local newspapers. American advertisers using Canadian stations may be put off the air temporarily at any time to make way for special programs which, in the judgment of the Commission, are of particular interest to Canadian listeners. None of these provisions is very remarkable in itself; but compared with the chaotic conditions in the United States, they seem like the ground plan of a radio listener's Utopia.

Europe: the Brink of Catastrophe

WHEN, a few weeks ago, The New Republic pointed out the danger of war in Europe, some of our readers accused us of being unduly alarmist. Today, nobody would support their view. The tension is greater than it has been at any time since 1918, and is probably greater than it was in May, 1914. A score of witnesses report that in the great capitals of Europe, no one any longer speaks of "if war comes"; it is always, "when war comes." The French are talking of the collapse of the Lausanne agreement, reverting to the Young Plan, and the exercise of "sanctions"—a handsome name for an ugly thing—including, perhaps, the seizing of the Rhine bridgeheads. This crisis is only partly the result of the stubborn German demand for the right to arm, which has brought the ironically entitled "Disarmament Conference" to an impasse. Whatever may be the immediate outcome in that conference, regardless of whether the diplomats are able to find a formula which, like so many other formulas in post-war Europe, may succeed in hiding and postponing for the time being an ultimately irrepressible conflict, the deep-rooted dangers will continue, and the Continent will drift steadily toward open armed combat.

As we have pointed out before, the Allies, and France in particular, are more responsible than anyone else for the rise to power of the swashbuckling Hitler regime in Germany. They never gave German Republicanism a decent chance. They subjected the Germans to intolerable humiliation and unendurable economic distress, all excused by clauses of the peace treaty which Germany had signed with a pistol at her head, and erected upon a false historical thesis of her sole war guilt. Under such circumstances, the marvel is that the Republic lasted so long, and that it made such an honest attempt over fourteen years to carry out the degrading and impossible terms which France, with the tacit consent of her other allies, imposed. We mention this, not for the pleasure of saying "we told you so," but because the fact is of the greatest importance in surveying the whole European situation and particularly in deciding what attitude the United States ought to take in regard to it. The unspeakable activities of the Hitler government toward its political opponents and in pursuit of its paranoiac hostility to the Jews have alienated public sympathy practically throughout the world; and many persons are saying that in view of this fact, "revision of the Versailles Treaty is dead." If this is true, then there is indeed no hope for us. If the public opinion of most of the world must henceforth support France, then another war is inevitable, and will not be long in coming.

Surveying the immediate situation, it may be useful to list the factors making for peace and those making for war. At the head of the first list is the fact that Germany is not at present prepared to join conflict with France, and that no one knows this better than Herr Hitler. Another point on the side of reassurance is Mussolini's evident present reluctance to join with Hitler in a war of the "Fascist group" against the French system of countries—France, Poland and the Little Entente. There are also powerful anti-war groups in France itself—the Left parties and, to some extent, the peasants, regardless of their party affiliations. England is just now trying to play the role of peacemaker, and will do much to avoid a war. Russia, also, is determined not to be dragged into a conflict if she can possibly avoid it. While she has recently resumed more cordial relations with France, and while Hitler's treatment of the Communists has been enough to cause passionate resentment in the Kremlin, it may safely be said that Russia's influence will be altogether on the side of peace.

What are the factors making for war? An important one is the realization, on the part of France and Poland, that if they do not crush Germany now, she is likely to try to crush them, five or ten years hence, which suggests the desirability of striking at once, while she is comparatively helpless. There is also the danger inherent in the sort of jingoistic appeal which Hitler has been making to the German population, and particularly to German youth. He has revived the memories of past military glories, and in so doing he has created a Frankenstein's monster which will be extremely difficult to control. A brilliant and powerful adventurer might control it—might canalize the emotion along constructive channels, as Mussolini has done to a certain extent with his reconstruction schemes, etc. While it is too early to form final judgments on Hitler, the best present evidence is that he is neither brilliant nor strong—but is rather a cunning, weak and unscrupulous man who has been made by events. If this is true, he might not be able to prevent young Germany from going to

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war, after a series of humiliating incidents, regardless of the odds and in a spirit of desperate, fanatical immolation. War of this sort might develop, particularly, along the German-Polish frontier, where the situation is already so tense, and there is so much bad blood. Finally, the very fact that everyone believes, and says, that war is coming makes it more likely that war will come. There is something of a general compulsion-neurosis, which causes feverish preparation for war which in turn makes the compulsion even deeper; and so on.

It may be, of course, that Europe will outride this crisis as she has others in the past. On the specific issue of permitting Germany to rearm, both sides are bluffing to a certain extent. It is possible that neither will succeed in this attempt and that, by common consent, the status quo will be maintained a while longer. But if such a development comes, it will be a miracle of good luck and not the result of diplomatic skill. The diplomats are as usual following a course which on the whole makes matters worse.

It now seems likely that one of the casualties of the general situation will be the London Economic Conference, on which such high hopes were built so short a time ago. If there is no agreement at Geneva, none of any importance can be expected at London. Indeed, with Germany in her present mood it is hard to see how London can be a success no matter what may come out of Geneva. The only substantial hope for London lay in the possibility that all the Great Powers might simultaneously lay aside, even if only partially and temporarily, the policies of economic nationalism which one and all have recently been pursuing. That hope now seems even more delusive than it did a few weeks ago. The United States and Great Britain may come to some important decisions affecting these two countries only; and it is possible that definite agreements may be reached between the United States and a few other countries individually, for reciprocal reductions of tariffs; but that is all. And it goes without saying that such an achievement is totally and pathetically inadequate to quench the fires of the depression which have been and still are raging throughout the world. It remains true, of course, that something can be done by each country, acting alone on its internal problems, to lessen the severity of the sufferings of its own people.

For the United States, the present European situation is in some ways strikingly analogous to that which existed before we entered the Great War in April, 1917. There is even Hitler's anti-Jewish campaign to take the place of von Tirpitz's unrestricted submarine warfare. It is to be hoped that America will have the wisdom not to repeat the frightful mistake made sixteen years ago. Nothing that we can now do will help to resolve the European quarrel. No matter how many consultative pacts or embargo agreements we might sign, we would become only one more pawn in the European game. Sixteen years ago, we helped to give France a mastery of Europe which she has used to bring ruin to the whole Continent; if we came to her aid again we should only help to perpetuate the evils of the Versailles system. This is not the dictate of selfish isolationism or of that moral superiority which would "let Europe stew in her own juice." It is merely a frank facing of the realities, undeceived by any delusions of grandeur about the might and power of America. There can be no peace in Europe until the people of that long suffering Continent are at last prepared to accept justice as its base; and the bitter truth that only on justice can permanent peace be built is one which neither we nor any other outsider can instill.

Tax Profits!

ULTIMATELY no single feature of the administration's economic policy will be more important than its taxation program. Where taxes are levied, what their amount is, and how the proceeds are distributed must influence profoundly the functioning of our economic institutions and their social effects. Most people think of taxation merely as a means of raising the funds required to pay for a miscellaneous lot of government expenditures. Really, however, it is a control exerted by government on the direction of the stream of income. If consciously used as an instrument of policy, the taxing power is capable of a far more beneficial effect on the general life than it has ever before had.

The first way in which the problem has seriously concerned the administration is in connection with the public-works section of the industry-recovery act. The President is correct in wanting to accompany the authorization of such a large amount of expenditure by a specific means of raising the revenue necessary to pay the interest and amortization on the debt created. If this is not done, the budget cannot be balanced even in the sense of paying for current expenses out of current income. Furthermore, any inflationary program which contemplates paying the interest on borrowing by means of more borrowing is certain to get beyond control, if it works at all.

The President has passed on to Congress the question what sort of tax shall be levied to meet this debt service. He has had under serious consideration a manufacturers' sales tax for this purpose. As The New Republic has many times argued, a sales tax as part of a permanent and general taxation program is unjust and undesirable. It yields less revenue for the expense of administration than direct taxation, it bears more heavily on the poor than on the rich in proportion to their total incomes and to their ability to pay, and it is so concealed that its real nature is not obvious to the taxpayer. As a special measure with a limited purpose, and levied in connection with a program which is aimed

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to increase income all round, there is more to be said for it, but even here it should be adopted only as a last resort.

High and progressive income and inheritance taxes are of course far preferable. We have by no means reached the limit of yield which could be achieved by perfecting measures of this sort, even admitting that such taxes may be more difficult to administer in this country than in Great Britain. The greatest hole in our taxation system, however, is and has been ever since the abolition of the excess-profits tax after the War, the absence of a sufficient direct tax on profits. Such a tax would tap at its source the stream of income which flows into large individual incomes and inheritances. It would, furthermore, dip into that large part of business profits which customarily is not distributed at all, but is held in reserves and surplus for reinvestment. At any time and under any circumstances a well devised, progressive tax on profits would be desirable. In view of the present administration's economic program, such a tax is wellnigh indispensable, entirely aside from the need of revenue for certain specific purposes.

The first reason is furnished by the aim to bring about a controlled inflation—or, if one likes the term better, a business recovery with rising prices. When business improves and prices rise, there occurs not only a general increase in income, but a redistribution of income among various economic groups. Production costs as a rule do not rise so rapidly as selling prices, wage rates lag behind profit margins. While labor benefits at first through fuller employment, that benefit is soon curbed by an increased cost of living, which is likely to go up faster than wages. Every inflationary period tends to concentrate income in the profits of the owners of productive industry. Profits benefit first of all and, as inflation goes on, they benefit immensely more than any other kind of income. Indeed, it may be said that the one sure sign of inflation is increasing profits—profits which increase so generally over the field and with so little relation to comparative efficiency that John Maynard Keynes has called them "windfall profits." If taxes can be devised which will levy largely on these profits, an enormous source of revenue will be opened as soon as inflation begins to work, a juster distribution of income will be achieved and, indeed, the chances of controlling the inflation will be greatly enhanced. For the easy profits provide both the lure and the means for relative overexpansion on the part of industry, and the enlargement of capital commitments which later turn out to have been unsound speculation.

The second reason is allied to the first, but it relates more directly to the industrial-control program. Many economists who have studied the problem of economic planning have pointed out that a central feature in any sound planning system must be the control of new investment. The places where capital goes, and the amounts that are invested, determine the character of future industrial capacity. If production is to be balanced on any approach to an engineering program for supplying a population as fully as possible with goods in the order of their importance, the proper allocation of new investment is a prime necessity.

The relation of an efficient profits tax to this need is obvious. A large proportion of new investment—estimated for some periods as nearly half the total—is made by corporations directly out of their undistributed profits. The new investment which takes place through the sale of securities is already more or less canalized, and though it is not controlled for social ends, may be subjected to more or less control by adoption of full publicity, based if possible on estimates of the future of the industries in question. But that investment made directly out of profits escapes control entirely. Rexford G. Tugwell, one of the economic advisers of the President, stresses this point particularly in his new book, "The Industrial Discipline" (Columbia University Press). He there outlines broadly a scheme for collecting part of the profits of each industry in a central fund, which can be parceled out for new investment in a calculated way and in the light of full information. Whether this scheme or some other is adopted, taxation of profits furnishes an extremely useful instrument to transfer from individual to social hands the decisions as to what new capacity shall be created.

Admittedly it is difficult to devise a progressive profits tax that is both efficient and just. You can take a small flat percentage of profits measured in dollars, as we now do, but if you attempt to vary the percentage according to the amount of the profits, you meet immediate difficulties. A large profit in dollars for U. S. Steel may really be a smaller percentage on the capital invested than a small dollar profit of a local garment manufacturer. On the other hand, accounting principles vary so widely and are so imperfectly applied that it is almost impossible, under present conditions, to vary the tax according to the rate of return on the investment; few really know what the investment is. But if uniform accounting for each industry can be required under the industry-recovery measure, it should be possible to work out a tax which varies either in relation to the return on the investment or to the profit margin above costs. The best intelligence which the administration can command ought to be devoted to this problem. Accounting of the sort required for a good profits tax will be just as necessary for the other purposes in view, if any sound control over prices and wages is to be exercised. The best possible accounting, plus full and detailed publicity, is the *sine qua non* of any economic-planning effort. With the benefit of such accounting, the government may tap the best possible source of revenue and make progress with a matter which lies at the very heart of economic reconstruction. Unless the government can exert social control over profits, either directly or indirectly, it cannot exert much social control over anything else.

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Art for Propaganda's Sake

DIEGO RIVERA'S frank statement that on the advice of friends in Moscow he came to this country as a propagandist for the proletariat—which, in a capitalist country, is to say for revolution—is consistent with his position in the controversy over his dismissal as he was finishing his great fresco at Rockefeller Center. From the first Mr. Rivera has contended that the political value of his work is more important to him than its artistic value. He has steadily maintained, and with reason, that the disputed fresco would still be revolutionary if he substituted another leader, real or symbolic, for the portrait of Lenin to which the Rockefellers objected, and that he prefers to have the whole painting destroyed rather than make the substitution. His announcement may appear to prevent all defense of his work on the ground of its art, or because the artist is superior to politics. Certainly it has calmed the enthusiasm of many of his bourgeois partisans. Nevertheless art does not become nothing but propaganda simply because the artist frankly and honorably states his own convictions.

Nothing that Mr. Rivera has said has altered the position of the Rockefeller family, which is self-contradictory, or their tactics, which were arbitrary and insulting. The question still remains, Why did they employ Rivera? They are among the outstanding beneficiaries of the capitalist order. Rivera is avowedly anti-capitalist in his convictions and his art. As The New York Times remarked after his dismissal, his fresco, on the walls of a building owned by the Rockefellers, is like a row of swastikas over a synagogue. But if you don't want swastikas over your synagogue, you don't employ an artist whom you know to be a specialist in swastikas. An artist is no mere technician. When Millet saw what William Morris Hunt had learned in the studio of Couture, he asked, "What have you to *say* with it?" What Rivera says with his magnificent technical equipment is no secret to the Rockefeller family. He had caricatured the elder John D. Rockefeller in his "billionaires" group in Mexico—and the caricature appears in the portfolio of photographs of the Mexican frescoes published by the Museum of Modern Art, which the Rockefellers help largely to finance. Knowing of the caricature, and knowing also the revolutionary character of those frescoes and of Rivera's work generally, they brought him to New York and had his work exhibited at the Modern Museum. Then they commissioned him to paint the fresco at Rockefeller Center, and accepted his preliminary sketches. Their action in employing him seems to us much more inconsistent with their position in the capitalist world than their action in dismissing him. Their behavior indicates a sudden and perplexing *volte-face*, and only the painter's own action in removing the whole question from the field of art into that of politics has saved them from an extremely embarrassing position.

It looks as if the Rockefellers or their agents had become panicky. It was unnecessary to send a whole army of policemen and plain-clothes men against a man armed only with paintbrushes. It was also unnecessary to persuade the telephone company to cut off his private telephone in the mezzanine—as if he might use it to summon an opposing host! Their action, and the manner in which it was taken, have precipitated a scandal which could have been avoided if they had kept their heads and allowed the artist to finish his work; a scandal that will inevitably harm a cause which several members of the Rockefeller family have generously supported—that of American art. Fear is contagious. American mural painting is just beginning to emerge from the bathos that the timidity of art commissions and owners of buildings has imposed upon it. It cannot become truly significant without the aid of these people. There is danger that the scandal may frighten them back into the "safe" insipidity which has made most American mural painting a disgrace to American civilization.

We cannot see that anything Mr. Rivera has said alters his moral right to complete his work. A finished painting can be covered quite as easily as an unfinished one. But why cover it? The painter's own widely published statements have pretty well canceled its propagandist value. Its artistic value remains, and that is of tremendous importance to American art. It should be placed on public view. If the Rockefellers are still afraid of being identified with its revolutionary implications, they might adopt the policy of the editorial disclaimer. Their walls are their own, of course. They can stretch several dozen square yards of conventional bathos over Rivera's splendid fresco, and perpetuate the scandal their action has precipitated. But they could also exhibit the picture, with an appended statement that nothing in it is to be taken as expressing the sentiments of the Rockefeller family. Why not?

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The Satire of Samuel Butler[1]

THE GENIUS of Samuel Butler was a livid intense flash. It showed blackest darkness about it, then itself grew dim.

The child of a provincial English rectory, he grew up in the narrowest, the most snobbish, the most bigoted and the most ungracious atmosphere which the Protestant nineteenth century produced. He rebelled against it and broke away from it, and he damned it forever in his masterpiece, "The Way of All Flesh," which is likely to survive as one of the classical accounts of how hateful life could become when the successful English middle class mixed avarice with religion. "I had to steal my own birthright," says Butler. "I stole it and was bitterly punished. But I saved my soul alive." The punishment had affected him more permanently than he knew. He had blasted Langar Rectory to eternity, but it had left upon him its blight. His soul was alive; but, as Bernard Shaw says, he had been crippled by his early training. Having begun as the bad boy of a pious family, he was never to outgrow that state of mind. The fear of his father's rage and his mother's prayers could still inhibit his mental processes; and he could never as a grown man assert himself without something of the sulkiness of the adolescent child who blurts out that he doesn't believe the Bible, without betraying by excessive pugnacity the delusion that the world, like his family, had conspired to keep him down.

The Freudian would be able to show how, even after Butler had escaped from the domination of his father, he was still forced to keep putting in his father's place other persons of high authority and, identifying himself with some lesser person, insist on the latter's superior claims. Dante, Virgil, Bach, Beethoven and Darwin had all to play old Butler's role, while Handel, Giovanni Bellini, Tabachetti and Gaudenzio Ferrari figured the snubbed young Samuel. When he did admire accepted reputations, as in the case of Shakespeare and Homer, he had to invent an original heretical theory as to who they had really been and what they had really meant. And though in "Erewhon" and "The Way of All Flesh" his revolt against his father had inspired him to his most brilliant work, his controversies with substitute fathers became less and less interesting as he grew older, and he himself became a kind of crank.

The shadows of the rectory were closing on him. His wit had attracted attention when "Erewhon" had first come out, but he was never really to become a part of the general culture of the time till "The Way of All Flesh" was published after his death and Bernard Shaw, the great popularizer, began to popularize him. Shaw points out that, despite Butler's rebellion against the intolerance of his parents, in spite of his lifelong yearning toward a world of playful opinions and easy manners, he had become as intolerant about Darwin as his father could ever have become about Samuel; and the elder Yeats has put on record that Butler's aspect on a railroad journey was so excessively unsociable and forbidding that, if one did not know him well, one did not even dare to address him.

"Erewhon," however, which was written in Butler's late twenties and early thirties, has the freshness and the bravado of Butler's first defiance of the rectory and of his escape from his father and from England; and it is consequently his most attractive, although not his greatest, book. While the young Butler, just up from Cambridge, had been preparing for ordination in London, he had been shaken in his faith by discovering that among the poor boys in a class he was teaching the ones who had not been baptized were not, so far as he could see, morally inferior to the ones who had; and, to the tune of lamentation and fury on the part of his father and mother, he had decided that the Church was not for him. He had persuaded his father to send him to New Zealand; and there in less than five years he had nearly doubled the £4,400 with which his father had grudgingly equipped him. The adventures amid wild and beautiful landscapes which finally bring Butler's hero to Erewhon are simply Butler's travels in New Zealand; and his satire has here the clear-headedness and the high spirits of freedom of a youth a long way from home and on his own. When he returns to England, his father will not fail to cloud the clear head and damp the fire by insisting that the publication of "Erewhon" has caused his mother's death; and when in later years he travels in Sicily, it will be to receive no more vital revelation than that of his unprovable theory of the Odyssey. But he has here in his "Erewhon" period something of true intellectual liberation. (And "The Way of All Flesh" and "Life and Habit" followed closely on "Erewhon.") He touches here more intimately than ever afterwards that race of healthy and natural beings, gay, good-mannered and with easy consciences, which he had imagined as the antithesis of the rectory and who were to haunt him and make him wistful all his life. (It will still be the legend of such a race which will delight him so much in Homer; the "authoress of the Odyssey" is probably a fantasy of such a mate as he might have found among them.) And even the eternal antagonism with his father loses here some of its bitterness and strain. In the chapter on "The World of the Unborn," there is a magnanimous,

[1] Written as an introduction to a new edition of "Erewhon," to be published by the Limited Editions Club, New York City.

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an almost tender, insight of a kind very rare in Butler: here for a moment he is free not to hate, he can understand that our parents have not chosen us any more than we have chosen them and that the plight in which the situation places us may be equally cruel for both.

"Erewhon," therefore, is not a production which one can compare to "Candide" or "Gulliver's Travels": it is not the definite expression of a satiric point of view based on mature experience, it is simply the brilliant first book of a young man. It does not pretend either to the logic of Swift or the singleness of intention of Voltaire: it is rather merely a device for uniting an assortment of satirical ideas—in some cases, reductions to absurdity of English ideas and institutions; in others, whimsically suggested improvements on them; in others, flights of fantastic reasoning of uncertain application.

Of these latter, the "Book of the Machines" is a curious and interesting example. There seem to be several intentions involved in it. There is, in the first place, a burlesque of the methods of theological controversy. Samuel Butler had been brought up on theology, and its sophistries had affected his habits of thought to such a degree that the arguments of "The Fair Haven," a satirical demonstration of the truth of the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, miss fire through sounding too much like earnest while the seriously intended arguments of "The Authoress of the Odyssey," coming after his insidious satires, put us on our guard against it. "The Book of the Machines," he asserted at first, was a parody of the famous "Analogy" of that Butler (unrelated to himself) who had tried to defend revealed religion against the attacks of the Deists by demonstrating that their objections could equally well be urged against the known constitution of Nature. In discussing "Erewhon" in a letter not long after its publication, Butler said of what he calls "The obviously absurd theory that they [the machines] are about to supplant the human race and be developed into a higher kind of life"—"When I first got hold of the idea, I developed it for mere fun and because it amused me and I thought would amuse others, but without a particle of serious meaning; but I developed it and introduced it into 'Erewhon' with the intention of implying: 'See how easy it is to be plausible, and what absurd propositions can be defended by a little ingenuity and distortion and departure from strictly scientific methods,' and I had Butler's 'Analogy' in my head as the book at which it should be aimed, but preferred to conceal my aim."

But he had also another book in mind. The piece, when it had first appeared as an article in a New Zealand paper, had been called "Darwin Among the Machines"; and though Butler denied in his preface that he had intended to make fun of Darwin's theory, he acknowledged later on that he had intended to criticize it: "With 'Erewhon,' " he wrote in a letter in 1902, "Charles Darwin smelt danger from afar. . . . He knew very well that the machine chapters in 'Erewhon' would not end there." "The Book of the Machines" is thus also the first thrust in Butler's lifelong battle with Darwinism. If man and the other animals could develop through Natural Selection, why could not the machines do so likewise? Darwin, in making the animals mechanical, had deprived life of purposiveness—he had "banished mind from the universe." And Butler was in the odd position—which would be susceptible of interesting analysis—of attacking on moral grounds the man who had supplied the most damaging weapons to the assault on that orthodox religion against which Butler himself was a rebel. Butler was a moral philosopher, to use the old-fashioned term: he never became a modern scientist. He stuck halfway in an anomalous position between science and traditional theology. It was again the shell of the rectory which he was never able to shed—and perhaps he felt some envy of Darwin, who had been a pupil of his grandfather's at Shrewsbury School. Yet, working in his cramped intellectual space, he was able to drive home his Lamarckian point with intensity and telling effect.

There is of course, however, in the fantasy of the machines another satiric theme and one much more obvious to us today, though evidently not so obvious to Butler: the appalling possibilities of the enslavement of men by the machine. "Man's very soul," Butler writes, "is due to the machines; it is a machine-made thing; he thinks as he thinks, and feels as he feels, through the work that machines have wrought upon him, and their existence is quite as much a *sine qua non* for his, as his for theirs." Nor does he fail to note the relation between the development of machinery and the competitive system: "It is for neglecting them [the machines] that he [man] incurs their wrath, or for using inferior machines, or for not making sufficient exertions to invent new ones, or for destroying them without replacing them. . . . The machines, being of themselves unable to struggle, have got man to do their struggling for them: as long as he fulfils this function duly, all goes well with him —at least he thinks so; but the moment he fails to do his best for the advancement of machinery by encouraging the good and destroying the bad, he is left behind in the race of competition; and this means that he will be made uncomfortable in a variety of ways, and perhaps die."

How did Butler, five years after "Das Kapital," eighteen years after Dickens's "Hard Times," fail to satirize the profit-motive which was turning the machine into a tyrant? He was far from approving the kind of civilization which the middle class had brought with it in its rise. On the one hand, he envied the civilized primitives of Homer (who lived before the machines) and of Erewhon (where they had destroyed them); on the other, the worldly upper class as represented by Townley

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in "The Way of All Flesh." When he makes Ernest in "The Way of All Flesh" turn shopkeeper and marry the housemaid whom his mother has turned away and send his children to be brought up by simple people such as his own great-grandfather had been, he is criticizing the achievements of his own family which, taking flight from the linen-draper who had been the father of Bishop Butler, had accumulated in two generations the education, the religion and the snobbery which they had unloaded on the unhappy Samuel. He understood very well the preoccupation of the Victorians with money; and in his use of money as a comic motivation he ran true to the satiric school of his time. For the Elizabethans, the Volpones and the Shylocks were still more or less exceptional types. But for Dickens, the Jonas Chuzzlewits, the Bounderbys, the Smallweeds and the Grides were common types of the dominant class. And with such comedies of Gilbert's as "Engaged" and the plays of the Marxist Shaw, money comes to play a similar role to that of gallantry in Wycherley and Congreve. Samuel Butler could not even write a classical oratorio on the idyllic theme of Narcissus without imagining such humorous program-notes as the following:

> An aged lady taken ill
> Desires to reconstruct her will;
> I see the servants hurrying for
> The family solicitor;
> Posthaste he comes and with him brings
> The usual necessary things.
> With common form and driving quill
> He draws the first part of the will,
> The more sonorous solemn sounds
> Denote a hundred thousand pounds, etc.

And it is the entanglement of quarrels about money with disputes about religion which makes the conflict between Ernest and his father in "The Way of All Flesh" so comic and so ignoble.

Yet Butler, though he could be most amusing about people's mercenary motives, was too much a middle-class man himself to analyze the social system in which, for all his financial difficulties, he occupied a privileged position. As soon as he got back from New Zealand, he invested all the money he had made there in a group of new companies—patent gas-meters, patent steam-engines, tanning extracts, and other commodities produced by the machines—recommended and financed by a banker friend of his, who also induced him to become a director. The companies all failed and Butler lost most of his money; he had felt bound in honor to buy back the shares of friends who had invested in them at his advice. Then, almost as badly off as before he had gone to New Zealand, he threatened to make certain claims against a reversionary interest on a family estate to which he believed his father had induced him to sign away his rights before he came of age—the case of the youth in "Erewhon" who "was charged with having been swindled out of large property by his guardian, who was also one of his nearest relatives"—and compelled the old man to make him an allowance. "If in my books," wrote Butler late in life, "from 'Erewhon' to 'Luck or Cunning?,' there is something behind the written words which the reader can feel but not grasp—and I fancy that this must be so—it is due, I believe, to the sense of wrong which was omnipresent with me, not only in regard to Pauli, the Darwins and my father, but also in regard to my ever-present anxiety about money."

When the elder Butler died, however, Samuel inherited his interest in the estate and lived comfortably the rest of his life. For all his satiric insight, he had basically the psychology of the rentier. One of the things that had nagged him most all his life was not receiving the unearned income to which he thought himself entitled; and when he finally got it, he sat down to write the Life and Letters of his grandfather, the headmaster and bishop, whom he had satirized in "The Way of All Flesh" and to announce himself in the preface to his last book, "Erewhon Revisited, "a member of the more advanced wing of the English Broad Church."

EDMUND WILSON.

The Myth of "Competitive Advantage"

BETWEEN the years 1922 and 1930 many American economists, pointing to the relationship between a liberal tariff policy and the development of our foreign trade, preached the doctrine—long recognized in England and other creditor countries—that if we expected to receive payments on our foreign debts they must be in the form of imports, and that consequently a shift in our commodity trade balance to a condition of import excess would be a normal development. However, large foreign loans floated in the United States in the decade of the 1920's created a situation that proved to the satisfaction of the unthinking and the partisan how foolish these ideas of the economists were. Because of these foreign loans, our export surplus continued while payments were being made on war debts and private investments abroad. The old idea of equilibrium in the balance of payments was lightly consigned by a speculation-drunk public to the scrap heap of economics which supposedly had been outmoded by the developments of the new era.

In the past three years the decline in foreign trade, the moratorium on war debts and the defaults on foreign-government bonds have forced the public to do some thinking about the first principles of international trade and finance. Discussion of the relation between exports and imports, between the trade balance and foreign loans, is no longer limited to the classroom, the highbrow journals and the financial columns of metropolitan news-

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papers. The strong opposition which the "Buy American" movement met in so many quarters is undoubtedly due in part to a wider understanding by the American public of the relation between exports and imports. The fallacies of the "Buy American" movement were so crude, however, that even a first-year student of international economics could detect them; but the more recent talk about "competitive advantage," although involving similar fallacies, is complicated by subtleties that call for clear thinking if misleading and dangerous conclusions are to be avoided.

It is often held that the depreciation of the dollar will give the American exporter an advantage over the exporters of other countries; it is hinted, both abroad and in this country, that the gold embargo and the inflation talk is a clever move on the part of the administration to outgeneral our competitors in international trade. It is even intimated that this action was taken to give us bargaining power at the coming Economic Conference, just as a nation preparing to enter a disarmament conference might authorize the construction of a half-dozen new cruisers.

The immediate rise in the dollar price of such staple international commodities as wheat, cotton and silver when speculative operations brought the fall of the dollar on the exchanges, might appear to support the view that the suspension of payments will benefit the American exporter, and that he may gain still more if the dollar falls further on the exchanges. The possibility of a battle for world markets, based upon competitive currency depreciation, has all the qualities of sensational newspaper copy.

The talk about "competitive advantage" is based upon a return to the thinking of the 1920's, upon a failure to recognize some basic facts in regard to the balance of payments. If we are to approach intelligently the question of inflation, if the success of the approaching Economic Conference is not to be endangered by loose talk about a country outwitting its rivals by currency depreciation, an understanding of the real situation is necessary. A suspension of specie payments gives a stimulus to exports only when the depreciation of the currency on the foreign exchanges is greater than its depreciation in internal purchasing power, that is, when prices within the country rise less than the price of foreign currencies. However, if the depreciation of a country's currency is less externally than it is internally, that is, if internal prices have risen more than the price of foreign currencies, then exporters are in a less advantageous position than before. It is not the depreciation of the currency, but a changing relation between exchange rates and prices, which provides a stimulus, either to exports or to imports, and creates a "competitive advantage" or "disadvantage."

If it were not for international lending and borrowing, this stimulus to exports or imports would be a temporary matter, lasting only until exchange rates and prices had again fallen into line. But as long as a country is lending, or is repaying debts, prices and exchange rates are not likely to fall into line; the constant pressure to transfer funds abroad keeps the currency depreciated on the exchanges more than it is internally, and thus gives a stimulus to exports and creates the export surplus by which the loan is transferred or the debt repaid. If a country is borrowing abroad, or receiving payments on old debts, prices and exchange rates are also not likely to fall into line, because these operations give a support to exchange, make the price of foreign currencies relatively lower than the price of domestic commodities and thus stimulate the imports which are the means by which the loan proceeds or the debt repayments are received.

In brief, the stimulus to exports or imports is related not to currency depreciation, but to international credit operations which alter the relation between exchange rates and prices. This connection between international financial transactions and the trade balance exists under gold-standard as well as under paper-standard conditions. For example, the United States had a depreciated paper currency from 1862 to 1879; a gold standard after 1879. Until 1873 we borrowed heavily in England; after 1873 this inflow of capital stopped and we began repayments. Until 1873 we had an excess of imports; after 1873 we had an excess of exports, which continued after we went on the gold standard. The United States was the only large country on the gold standard between 1920 and 1925, yet we had a great excess of exports over imports, despite the fact that our trade was largely with depreciated-paper countries. The explanation was that we were making large loans abroad. Argentina, borrowing heavily in the 1880's, when it was on a depreciated-paper basis, had a great excess of imports; repaying its loans after 1890, it had a great excess of exports, and continued to have after it went on the gold standard in 1899. Similar illustrations of the relation between foreign trade and investment could be cited from the experiences of many other countries.

Even ignoring the war debts and recognizing that many of our private investments abroad must be written off in whole or in part, the United States is still a creditor nation to the amount of many billions of dollars. Payment of interest and repayment of principal is bound to involve an increase of imports relative to exports, no matter what our currency policy is. For a creditor nation which is receiving payments on its loans to try to obtain a "competitive advantage" by currency depreciation is as futile as to attempt to reverse the flow of a river by blowing on its surface. Although to some the prospect of an eventual import surplus is a terrifying thing, it will be in reality a normal and healthy development. Whether we go back to gold, retain inconvertible paper money or try the silver standard, is of only the most ephemeral interest so far as the competitive position of our exporters is con-

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cerned. If affording the exporters a "competitive advantage" is the end and aim of governmental policy, the best way to accomplish this would be to encourage another orgy of foreign lending, and then have these loans go into default.

The talk about "competitive advantage" from currency depreciation is nothing but the old fallacy of the Mellon era—the denial of the relationship between exports and imports, the refusal to recognize the fact that repayments on foreign loans must involve an import surplus—dressed up in new terminology. Controlled inflation and the Economic Conference will present enough problems to the administration. We hardly need add to its troubles by encouraging exporters' hopes that the "competitive advantage" of currency depreciation offers them a new El Dorado, or by fostering irresponsible talk about our great monetary coup d'état, intended to give us control of the trade of the world.

FRANK WHITSON FETTER.

Shantytown, U. S. A.

WELCOME! You are now entering Hooverville. Settled during the Great Crisis. Named for the Great Engineer. Plenty of fresh air right from the water. The river, turgid with sewage, cold and green, flows past our doors next the rotting, abandoned docks. Delehanty's house is in the second row from the gap in the fence by which we enter, stooping. For more than twelve years Delehanty was a dyer.

"I'm first from Ireland," he says. "But I'm American, which nobody can deny."

Delehanty looks at me, but I had no thought of denying it. He didn't have to tell me he was first from Ireland. His tongue rolling the syllables out, thick on the r's, told me that.

"Thirty years I been in this country," he says, his big, seamed face stuck forward so his strawy hair does not touch the ceiling. "And I fought fer it in the War."

He looks at me from under his great, coarse eyebrows, challenging me to show him what he ever got out of that. We sit and have tea, the lidless kettle sitting precariously on his improvised stove, oven, furnace, hearth of bricks without mortar, the coals glowing hot within. The lamp, slanting from a spike in the wall, gutters full of the oil we got for a nickel I had.

Bill comes in and the small home is almost filled. Delehanty's bed takes the whole back end and the battered, shaky table fills one side, leaving room only for some improvised shelves in the corner which hold some rusty tableware, a hatchet, odds and ends, a tomato can half-full of grease for frying, the small bag of sugar I had got for a dime.

"How do you rustle up food?"

"Well, you can get bread out of the bakeries," Delehanty explains. Bill adds, "It's a day or two old, maybe, but it's o.k. to eat and they can't sell it no more." They explain the round of the small stores, getting food that would rot anyway. "But coffee and sugar, tobacco and oil for the lamps or kerosene for a stove—them's the things that's hard to get," Bill explains.

Bill takes me over to his shack. The alleys between the rows are full of water, but surprisingly clear of papers or garbage. Inside Bill's house, set up off the ground with a well laid floor, we find Bill's buddy, a cook, and Delehanty's housemate, a little Scotch sailor. "Painter—Carpenter—Decorator," is painted awkwardly on a piece of cardboard tacked to Bill's door. Underneath these words: "Tile Setting, Brick Laying, Stone Polishing," etc.

"And they come around and want you to work for nothing," Bill says, resentment burning in his wide-set eyes. Only a few years ago Bill was a contractor, in a small way, perhaps, but a contractor. He shows me a picture of his wife and his three-year-old baby boy.

"They're with her folks," he says. "If I do make any dough I try to send some of it, but hell—"

For two bits I get a bagful of eggs and Delehanty fries a mess for us. "It's sure damned seldom we see any eggs around here," he says.

Someone comes in the door. Bill walks out looking disgusted, but doesn't say anything. Delehanty goes on frying the eggs. The fellow stinks of alcohol. He wants a quarter to get a pint of smoke.

"I'm sick," he pleads. "My buddies and me—we're all sick."

"Sure, an' yer sick, rotten sick," Delehanty mutters. Sick with idleness, I think, with despair, but you're getting the wrong medicine from Tammany smoke joints. I haven't any more money, but he won't take no for an answer. "Let the gentleman alone," Delehanty says. "He's trying to eat and he don't want to be disturbed."

The fellow insists. "We gotta have a pint," he says. He won't get out.

"Now, get out, Dyer." Delehanty's eyes burn under his drawn-together eyebrows. His face sets itself determinedly, his massive shoulders hunch and let his big, raw-knuckled hands drop a bit ahead of him. Dyer stays and insists. Delehanty takes hold of his arm and swings him out the door. One sweep of his right arm and we can hear the fist crunching against Dyer's jaw. Dyer drops right there and lies still.

"The dirty bum," Delehanty says, stepping back inside, rubbing his hands on his trouser leg. "Can't let gentlemen alone."

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Bill comes back in. "By God," Delehanty fumes, "we're gentlemen and not no dirty bums like them." He tosses his shoulder toward the huddled form, lying unconscious outside the door.

"Most of the guys here are decent," Bill explains. "I guess you'd find damn near every trade there is in this camp." There are three hundred to three hundred and fifty men who have built themselves homes in this one Hooverville. "There're maybe a dozen or so of them bums.

"So long as they stay to themselves, o.k.," Bill goes on. Delehanty doesn't talk much. "You notice," Bill says, "how I walked out when he comes in the door." He indicates the still unconscious form. What a smack Delehanty packs, I think.

"I don't want to monkey with them at all."

"They'll learn to keep out of a decent man's shack," Delehanty says.

"Any time you're hungry," he tells me when I go, "you know where to come. If I got one cup of tea, half of it's yourn."

Hoovervilles are in a separate nation, with separate codes, though the men who live in them are still subject to a sort of imperialist intervention. The government which they trusted has kicked them out of their homes, has perhaps torn down a shack they built in another Hooverville, while at the same time refusing to recognize their existence. The sanitation and fire laws which were ignored when they lived in tenement houses are now invoked as excuse for destroying their shacks. The difference lies in the fact that no one profits from Hooverville tenants.

The boss won't give them a job, their A. F. of L. union, in thousands of cases, has banned them for not being able to pay dues. Recently, deportation raids were made in a Brooklyn shacktown with the aid of a preacher who had taken down names, promising help. Jesus saves, but not the workers. Dig in and wait for something to happen. The present bosses won't make it happen though; everyone hates the bosses and distrusts them.

In Detroit several hundred got together and elected a young fellow about twenty-five years old to go to Washington when the Hunger Marchers went there. "It's pretty hard to get them waked up," he told me. "Half of 'em are ashamed to be like they are and just wanta be left alone till there're jobs again."

He stands straight and sticks his blond stubbled chin a bit forward as he tells me these things. He's proud to have been elected—a deep, sincere pride which shows through the gray, tattered coat, held together with a safety pin. "But some of us guys know there ain't gonna be jobs and once we showed 'em that they come out to be the best fighters you've saw."

Below wealthy Riverside Drive in New York, more shacks are strung along the river for blocks and blocks. Near the foot of Seventy-second Street is a veterans' camp. From there they dot the bank all the way up to One Hundred and Tenth Street.

> Through pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.
> A charm from the sky seems to hallow us there
> Which seek through the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere.

An ex-apartment-house superintendent and a former iceman have hung this motto on the wall of their new home, facing the Hudson. The wall is made of old piano boxes, with dirt piled high about the outside to keep the cold out. Mitchell, the former superintendent, is still able to pick up a few handy-man jobs and thus keep the pair supplied with food. Oatmeal and fatback bacon, a little coffee. Anyway, food.

"Hooverville?" Mitchell says, his eyes crinkling at the corners, his mouth turning up a bit at the ends. "Hell, this is the snooty Roosevelt Heights!"

Down further live a mechanic, a bricklayer and a funny, little bow-legged longshoreman, a limey.

"He's English as hell," Martin, the bricklayer, tells me about the longshoreman, who's out front splitting kindling wood. "He's got a wife som'ers up in Canada.

"I don't think there's no better mechanic living than him," Martin continues, indicating a slender fellow, maybe thirty-five, bent over the engine of an auto on the road.

"When a man gets past fifty they haven't any more use for him," Martin says. He holds his body erect, but his hair is gray. He goes out to carry some water to the car outside which has been brought around for his buddy, the mechanic, to fix. They'll get enough out of that to eat for a few days more.

Walk into a shack on the banks of the Hudson, or walk into one on the huge dumps off Blue Island Avenue in Chicago, or enter a board hut in the Murphyville of Detroit. It is not very different. Some of them are well built, and ovens made from old bricks keep them warm. Men who can build houses like this from salvaged material are the men who built the buildings now standing empty in all of these cities.

Walk about on the underside of our civilization for a night or two. Walk down through the warehouse section of New York City and see the abandoned workers drawn up in the doorways, sleeping wrapped in paper for warmth. Stroll down beneath the beautiful Wacker Drive, Chicago. Talk to the men huddled about driftwood fires.

"What's your trade, buddy?"

"Bricklayer."

"Mechanic."

"Cook."

"Die setter."

In the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, the city dump exhibits a half-hundred shacks made from the tin of junked Fords, from old barrels. Pick your way, with the huge stacks of the grain elevators for background, to the shack of a young Swiss watchmaker. Little windmills, boats, carved birds

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which peck at the board to which they're nailed, represent time: hours and hours and hours. They are stuck all about his home.

Between another four walls of rusted metal oil barrels there lies a sailor with three broken ribs. He got a job on a tug. Maybe they worked him too fast, they had a short-handed crew. Anyway, he fell off a beam and broke three ribs. They kept him in the hospital for three days but he didn't have any more money. His buddy goes out to rustle up food while he lies there, waiting for the fractures to heal.

They rustle up food. In the produce market they go about from two in the morning till dawn with burlap sacks slung over their shoulders, picking up discarded onions, apples, carrots, a bit spoiled.

They barter, too. Down under Manhattan Bridge you can come upon a market in the evening where you can get an odd shoe for a nickel, a pair of shoes for a dime, a whole string of very slightly rusted safety pins for a penny, old brassières, books even, a purse for a couple of cents if you have any use for one. Anything that can be dug out of ash cans, picked up in gutters or alleys. A hammer with a broken handle, a whole pocketful of nails, a lamp with the glass cracked.

Hooverville. The home is the foundation of our nation. Five of us sat about a fire one night under Wacker Drive in Chicago. William Osborne was a Negro, his bushy hair was beginning to show gray streaks, his dark brown skin was cut ragged with deep black creases. He had been a waiter. Two of the others had found some packing boxes somewhere and had curled up in them, the open sides faced to the fire to catch the heat. Carlos sat on an empty two-gallon oil can, and nodded wearily. We talked.

"Where'd you work last?" I ask Carlos.

"Col'rado," he says. "Work in fields there. That's no good, now. There no work no more.

"Work no good there even when you got job. No pay right. Too much hours."

"He's a Communist," rapidly explains Osborne.

I turn to Osborne. "Who'd you vote for?"

"Roosevelt."

"Why him?"

"You don't think ah'd vote for Hoover now, do you?"

"Well, Roosevelt's no better."

Osborne looks at me sharply. "You'd vote for him, too, if you'd got paid for it."

I don't say anything. Osborne plods off into the darkness and comes back with several pieces of crate wood and a corrugated cardboard box. He rips up the box and carefully puts a piece on the fire. Fuel must be hoarded, used piece by piece through the long night.

"Too bad there isn't an election every week," I comment.

Carlos jerks his head up out of sleep and takes his battered, ash-colored hat off to scratch his head. His hair is straight and black and shiny. His eyes are straight and black and shiny, too. He's a Mexican.

"Uh. They forget Forgot Man purty quick again," says Carlos, and spits into the fire through the place where a tooth might have been.

BORIS ISRAEL.

Food in Russia

IV: *Food Distribution and Labor Discipline*

THE MOST important food-distributing agency in the Soviet Union is the Consumers' Coöperative, with a membership of 22.6 million in 1928 and 75 million in 1932, and with a chain of wholesale and retail stores extending into the remotest corners of the Union. In 1932, 64 percent of the urban and 87 percent of the rural business in the country was done by the Consumers' Coöperative. This colossal growth in membership and business has not been accompanied, however, by a corresponding rise in administrative efficiency. The coöperative personnel has been distinctly inferior: bureaucrats on top; slow, indifferent and rude employees on the bottom. The best Bolsheviks, despite a party resolution urging a change in spirit, have disdained work in the cooperative stores, manifesting a certain superior, one might almost say aristocratic, attitude toward the business of selling, buying and merchandising. As a result the coöperatives, like the kolhozi, were left to shift for themselves, without direction or guidance or sufficient Bolshevik supervision. Small wonder there have been more speculators, embezzlers, thieves and bureaucrats in the coöperative system than in any other branch of Soviet enterprise.

During a recent journey to the Polar region, I had occasion to stop at Nivastroy, where the Soviet government is now building the Northernmost hydro-electric station in the world. In perusing the back numbers of the local paper, I came across an editorial reading, in part:

> At the very moment that our Communist party is making a determined effort to improve workers' food supplies, class enemies are penetrating into our co-

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> operatives, undermining their work and creating endless food difficulties. . . . The impudence of our class enemies is boundless. They overcharge, pocketing the money, thus disrupting the price policy of the government. They steal and privately sell foodstuffs of which there is a shortage—butter, meat, sugar. . . . Of the nineteen persons now on trial, almost everyone is a *lishenets* [one deprived of his right of citizenship], or a kulak, or a former merchant who had concealed his identity and wormed himself into the workers' cooperative of Nivastroy. . . . The harm they have done is enormous and, under present conditions, especially grave. There should be no mercy. The sentence of the proletarian court must remind all those who would misappropriate public [socialist] property, who would try to attack us from the rear, that the punitive arm of the proletarian dictatorship will bring down upon them in every instance the extreme penalty provided by the law of August 7.

The sentence was published on October 21, 1932. Six were condemned to be shot; eleven to ten years of hard labor; the rest got off with lighter sentences.

I have cited this case because it is typical. Ever since the beginning of the revolution, the enemies of the soviets have given a great deal of their attention to the food supplies, that is, to the most vulnerable spot in the soviet organization, attacking it on two fronts—on the production front in the kolhozi and on the distribution front in the cooperatives. This is war to a finish. No wonder the August 7 decree, which declares stealing of communal property equivalent to counter-revolution and punishable by death, was invoked in Nivastroy and since then has been invoked in many other places.

That the decree is terribly drastic there can be little doubt. The Communists, however, believe it to be supremely just—"The very foundation of revolutionary law at the present moment." Stalin motivates the law in this fashion: "If the capitalists have pronounced *private* property sacred and inviolable, thus achieving in their time a strengthening of the capitalist order, then we Communists must so much the more pronounce *public* property sacred and inviolable, in order thus to strengthen the new socialist forms of economy in all fields of industry and trade. To allow thieving and robbing of public property, to pass by such counter-revolutionary outrages, means to help undermine the Soviet system the very foundation of which is public property."

Besides the inadequacy of its personnel, another serious flaw in the Soviet coöperative system has been its unwieldiness. The immense membership has not been sufficiently activized until recently. The central organs, whose function it has been to procure foodstuffs and other commodities for distribution among local stores, were not always in touch with the needs, resources or possibilities on the peripheries. Goods were being distributed slowly, mechanically; sent where they were least needed. Commodities that could go directly to retail stores were often shipped to wholesale warehouses, thus causing waste of time and shipping facilities, handicapping turnover and creating artificial shortages. Not infrequently, cellars of warehouses were crammed with goods while shelves of retail stores were empty. Products were being wasted, allowed to rot, dry up, disappear. Transportation of perishable goods was bad, and the fault lay not always with the railroads. Shops and offices were overstaffed. Overhead expenses were much too high.

Periodically, the government made efforts to improve distribution. In order to establish a greater correspondence between local supply and demand, coöperatives were in most instances transformed into "closed" stores, each "closed" store serving a strictly limited number of workers and their families. Each industry, each factory, each plant, had its own special "closed" coöperative stores accommodating exclusively its own workers. Effective to a degree, the reform still left much to be desired. First, the central coöperative organs persisted in their inflexibility and insensitiveness to local requirements. Second, the "closed" stores had no organic connection with the enterprises they served. They were independent of factory managements, selecting their own personnel and carrying on business as they saw fit. This precluded real coördination of effort on the part of each individual factory and the special store which was supposed to serve it.

A step toward removing these defects was taken when the "closed" coöperatives were granted the right to purchase supplies directly from individual or collective farms in the vicinity, and to develop their own vegetable gardens, their own dairy, hog, rabbit, cattle or poultry farms, their own fishing organizations. Another step was taken several months ago when 260 of the most important industrial plants in the country were ordered to assume jurisdiction over the "closed" stores and subsidiary agricultural enterprises in their respective territories. In other words, hundreds of the largest stores in the Union, with a combined trade turnover of over 60 percent of the total for all "closed" stores, were taken out of the coöperative system and handed over to individual plants.

The most far-reaching move, however, has been the legalization of kolhoz trading. Since last May representatives of collective and individual farms have been allowed to dispose of their surplus produce in the city markets. This reform, as well as the other reforms I have just mentioned, is of comparatively recent date. Their effectiveness cannot yet be properly estimated. The trend, however, is unmistakable: decentralization of the food-procuring and food-distributing apparatus and greater individual and group initiative from below.

The underlying principle of food distribution in the Soviet Union is that of reward and deterrent. In a country where the loss of a job is no punishment, where a higher wage offers but a slight incen-

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tive and where things to eat are at a premium, more and better food becomes one of the chief rewards for good, important or unpleasant work, while less and inferior food serves as the most effective check on inefficiency, inebriety and insubordination. This principle is applied to individuals, factories, industries, cities and regions. Miners are entitled to more food than bookkeepers; bookkeepers to more than salespeople. Shock workers get more than ordinary workers. The gradations are various and complex. Similarly, key enterprises, industrial towns, settlements remote from food-producing regions, cities of strategic or political significance, are fed much more generously than other sections of the Union. Thus, one's well being depends not on wages, but on one's efficiency, one's factory, one's city, one's coöperative.

This naturally tends to stimulate excessive mobility of labor. Until a couple of months ago workers used to peregrinate from one factory to another, one city to another, thus reducing industrial efficiency, labor discipline and possibilities of equitable food distribution. The labor turnover in the factories was terrific. What was almost as bad, workers who dashed about from one job to another would quite often retain the ration cards issued to them by the various enterprises where they had been formerly employed and were thus enabled to obtain goods at two or more "closed" stores and receive several times their allotted share. Indeed, it was discovered that in many cases the total number of customers in a "closed" store was as much as double the number of those legitimately entitled to trade there. The steady, conscientious worker suffered a double injustice—he worked harder and he was able to obtain less. While he worked, the idler would go to the store and have the first choice and the greatest variety of foodstuffs.

To obviate these deficiencies the Soviet government issued a decree (November 15, 1932) according to which even a single inadequately explained absence from work is punishable by immediate discharge, by loss of living quarters—if the offender lives in rooms provided by the enterprise which employs him—and the immediate loss of his ration card. Depriving one of a ration card in the Soviet Union is a severe punishment. But the evil of willful absences had become so grave that nothing less than a drastic measure would remedy it. The worst offenders were almost invariably from among the millions of new workers, the untrained, untutored, undisciplined folk from the village. Unlike the older workers, these had no special love for the plant or the machine. Nor did they have the revolutionary workers' feeling of part ownership and proletarian responsibility. They had to be broken in, educated to a realization of their duties as Soviet citizens. In a new and alien milieu, these peasant workers proved more or less immune to social pressure. Ridicule in the factory newspapers, names emblazoned on the dishonor roll, censure from older workers, counted for little. The possible loss of food seemed to be the only thing they really feared, the only argument they fully understood.

As I have already pointed out, the task of the Soviet food-distributing agencies has been rendered particularly difficult by the rapid growth of the urban population. The recently introduced passport system (December 27, 1932) is calculated to relieve the cities of people not directly engaged in productive or other socially useful pursuits. Drifters, criminals, speculators, have been the first to go. Mainly, however, the enactment has been directed against the flocks of peasants who, leaving their families in the kolhozi to do the work on the farm, poured into the already crowded cities. The 1933 plan, by stressing the urgency of mastering industrial plants already in existence rather than the need of putting up new ones, tends to keep out of the industrial centers large numbers of unskilled peasant laborers. The latest decree prohibiting peasants from leaving their kolhozi without permission from the kolhoz administration is a step in the same direction.

The passport decree was the dramatic climax to the series of decrees which the Soviet government had issued in 1932 in a determined effort to tighten up the country, to crush opposition and sabotage, to train the Soviet workers and peasants to the demands of proletarian discipline and to solve some of the more pressing food problems. It is now absolutely impossible to obtain a food card without presenting a passport, a document given only to those who are engaged in production or other socially necessary work.

With a world of enemies within and without the U.S.S.R., the Bolsheviki are finding the building of socialism in a vast and terribly backward country no easy task. Enormous difficulties, enormous sacrifices, enormous pains. But, to quote the Bolshevik leader Enukidze, "he who maintains that such a tremendous task as the reconstruction on a socialist basis of an immense land can be accomplished without difficulties is either a fool or a knave. The time is not yet for summarizing all the difficulties which were and still are confronting us in our struggle for a socialist victory. But some day, when people will study at what price we carried out the Five Year Plan, at what price we transformed our agriculture along collectivist lines, created state farms, machine and tractor stations, taught our workers and peasants the principles of socialist labor discipline, the honest students will be amazed at the relatively few sacrifices of our great revolution." A new world, a new classless society, a new collectivist psychology are being born in the Soviet Union. The pains are the pains of birth. And the difficulties are the difficulties of growth—colossal, tumultuous, even if distressingly disproportionate growth. Growth of population, cities, industry, trade. Growth of collective large-scale mechanized

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farming. Growth of mighty coöperative enterprises. Growth of culture, science, learning. Growth of genuine solidarity among the 150 different peoples that inhabit this great land. Above all, growth of a feeling of security and hope in the breasts of scores of millions of workers and peasants in the first and only Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

This spring the sowing campaign has been marching ahead at an unprecedented rate. By April 12, three times as much land had been sown as on the same date last year—a success which seems to justify these sanguine hopes.

JOSHUA KUNITZ.

This is the final article in Mr. Kunitz' series on the food situation in Russia.—THE EDITORS.

Washington Notes

War Debts over the White House—A Good Press —Hamstrung Critics—Industrial Control— Eating out of His Hand

AS JUNE approaches the World Economic Conference and war debts loom larger in the Washington picture. Until a few days ago the latter had purposely been submerged, and certainly the omission of any reference to them in the President's radio address was calculated. However, it seems fairly probable that a war-debt message is being prepared and that Mr. Roosevelt will ask Congress for a certain amount of authority to negotiate. It is, indeed, possible that the request will have been made before this piece is printed. At the moment, the administration attitude is that it fully expects the June 15 payments to be made and it is asserted on the "highest authority" that the White House has offered no compromises on debts either to England or France.

Of course, the hollowness of this attitude is completely apparent to everybody. No one expects that the June 15 payments will be made except by one or two countries, and the opposite assumption is merely typical of the lack of candor with which this whole subject has been treated. Everybody in politics and public office seems to be afraid of it. Yet no thoughtful man denies that it is a big part of the world economic situation and that no general international coöperation is possible until and unless some satisfactory settlement of the problem can be found.

Clearly, the position of this country in the forthcoming conference will be a weak one if, in addition to insisting upon June 15 payments, the rider Congress attached two years ago to the Hoover moratorium, against either reduction or cancellation, is permitted to remain in force. The trading potentialities of our delegation would be reduced to nothing and the resentment toward us intensified. It is, in fact, an unthinkable position and there seems little doubt that Mr. Roosevelt will make the effort to have Congress strike off the shackles. Political pessimists are inclined to think that far stiffer resistance to giving him negotiating powers on debts and tariffs will develop than toward any other thing for which he has asked.

So far as the tariff is concerned, the opposition will be due to the local interests which exist in nearly every state, and which nearly every Senator, Democrat as well as Republican, is concerned in protecting. The fight over war debts will be largely engineered by the Hearst papers and led by the senatorial demagogues who, for so many years, have bellowed about the outrage of transferring these debts to "the bent back of the American taxpayer." It is, however, my opinion that Mr. Roosevelt will get what he wants for the simple reason that the great weight of public sentiment wants him to have it. Furthermore, I am credibly informed that if stubborn opposition develops in the Senate, it is Roosevelt's purpose to make another radio address in which he will appeal directly to the people for support.

While there were some flaws in his second radio address, the popular response was extraordinary and the press was almost uniformly good. So far as I could discover, there were not more than two or three sour notes sounded in the country and, curiously enough, these did not come from important Republican papers. The truth is that the press as a whole is almost as solidly behind Mr. Roosevelt today as it was behind Mr. Coolidge in that now distant day when the so-called Mellon plan of taxation was pending. Then, the large Democratic newspapers, which would profit by the proposed reductions, were so fearful that something would happen to diminish the prospects of passage, that, as one well known writer said at the time, they were almost afraid to hint that Mr. Daugherty was not an ornament to the public service. The present situation has a curious similarity. The feeling that unless the experiments launched by the Roosevelt administration along both industrial and financial lines will work, a collapse will occur from which we will hardly recover, smothers criticism from the Republican organs even when the proposals shock every fiber of their orthodox souls.

At the time this is written, there is still one part of the Roosevelt program not yet revealed which, in my judgment, is of as much importance as anything that has preceded it. I refer to the bill providing for industrial mobilization or control. Mr. Roosevelt dislikes the word control and prefers to describe what is proposed as a "partnership" between business and the government. Actually, I think, control is a more accurate word. This measure, upon which Senator Wagner of New York and members of the professorial group have been at work for some time, will probably make its appearance in a few days. Those in closest touch with its preparation believe that it will mark the beginning of a new economic era in which trade and industry will be "encouraged" to organize, regiment and regulate themselves. The idea is that this will be done voluntarily. However, if I am not misinformed, the "encouragement" provided by the bill will be of such a character that industry will have no other choice than to accept it.

There are those who believe that the plan about to be launched will be the greatest experiment of our generation and that it will take one or two decades to perfect the new system. That its trend is distinctly towards socialization of industry is not denied. Private operation and ownership will be retained, but there will be federal planning and control. It is the most far-reaching piece of

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legislation yet proposed, not even excepting the farm-relief bill, which our present national planners regard as a companion proposition.

The Black thirty-hour-week bill has already been sidetracked in order to prepare the way for the larger measure, which seeks to regulate production as well as work, wages and hours, but by a less arbitrary method than that outlined by the Alabama Senator. If the bill is not finally weakened before it is passed, my prediction is that it will have a scope undreamed of heretofore. Moreover, despite the undeniable trend toward socialization, I think it will have powerful support from business.

One of the really amazing things of recent weeks is the change in the attitude of business leaders toward governmental regulation and control. In former days, the ordinary business man could work himself into a lather concerning the "intrusion of the federal government into private business." Chambers of Commerce and metropolitan newspapers used the extension of the federal power over business as a favorite denunciatory theme. It is interesting to recall that the most consistent and violent denunciations were wont to come from Democratic spokesmen in political campaigns. In fact, it is easy to recall many such denunciations in the last campaign. Under the circumstances, the spectacle of a Democratic administration proposing an unprecedented control over business is only a little less interesting than the spectacle of big business leaders, who used to shudder over the idea of federal interference, practically begging to be taken over.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

The Upturn Verein—Peeping Round the Corner—Trade Indices—The Building Barometer —Eyes on Mr. Woodin

IT IS pleasant to be told that the depression is now practically over. It is especially gratifying to get the news almost directly from the inside. Mr. James H. Rand, Jr., the well known pigeonhole manufacturer of the Remington Rand Company, sells typewriters, filing systems, all sorts of intriguing little cards and tabs and thumb-clips for keeping track of what happens to business. Naturally Mr. Rand is right in assuring us that this gives him a "background of FACTS both here and abroad." With 200 branch offices and 1,800 salesmen, he can project "a continuous picture of every business activity in the United States." Mr. Rand tells us, basing his statement on the facts gathered by his huge scouting force, that we are on the way up and that three million more men will be at work in September.

This would be reassuring if we hadn't heard Mr. Rand before. A few nights before the last election, Mr. Rand talked over the radio in a national hook-up and told us that his business was one which gave him a background of facts, and that through those 200 branch offices and 1,800 salesmen, he was able to see—not guess—what was going on. And he told us then that Mr. Hoover had won the fight and that prosperity was just all ready to jump out from behind the corner.

No one can blame business men for ardently wishing the return of business. But four years of fizzling ought to be enough to convince them that they cannot get it back through their publicity departments. Hoover tried the strategy of winning football games with cheer leaders. Roosevelt has refrained from that, although Mr. Woodin has made one bad break. But the newspapers are doing the job in a most intensive manner. The most favored of all the joyous barometers is the rise in the steel operations. These steel activities have been soaring to screaming headlines for weeks. But the simple facts, when examined, are not so soothing. For instance, it turns out that most of the increased activities in the steel mills have been the result, not of brand-new business, but of a sudden determination on the part of the steel people to fill somewhat more rapidly, and perhaps for psychological effect, orders already on their books. Actual operations we are told have increased about 70 percent. This is splendid, but actual new orders have increased only about 1.5 percent. Unfilled orders have increased 23,000 tons to a total of 1,864,000. But an order from California on the R.F.C.-financed bridge project accounted for 124,000 tons in new orders, and if this order had not arrived in time, apparently those unfilled orders would have shown a decrease.

No one should cry down the evidences of a true rise in business when it arrives. But no one should be deluded into supposing that all the surface wrinkling up of things these last few weeks means a return to prosperity. Mr. Rand announces with glee that by September, 3 million more men will be back at work. That's a good-humored guess. But even if true, that will still leave at least 10 to 12 million people out of work, which in turn means that things will still be worse than they were in the summer of 1932.

For the benefit of those who watch the trade indices, there is still one item almost completely missing which, in fact, is the only one worth watching for. It is the item which records the course of capital construction, the production of investment goods. When we rose out of the 1921 depression, the index which first began to rise was that of building, engineering projects and new capital financing. Construction, which is almost all done on credit, never sank so low as now. In January, 1921, building contracts totaled $56,035,925, and in March they had expanded to $118,436,000. Next month they rose to $146 million. And a glance at the line depicting the course of business that year reveals that the curve upward started in the late spring of 1921. By April of the next year building contracts were up around the 200 million mark for the month and then the boom was on its way.

Today building contracts are not only negligible, but are actually lower than they were last month. Moreover, in the year 1921 over $3,000 million of new long-term financing was done by private business which thus pumped an immense amount of new income into the machine. There is nothing like that in sight now. Capital construction, public and private, is almost dead. It is becoming apparent that some influence in Washington is fighting against a public-works program. And, on a pure guess, I suspect this influence proceeds from the same source which is now opposing any sort of banking reform.

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Twice The New York Times has reported that the opposition to any kind of banking bill, which is irritating Senator Glass so much, comes from Secretary of the Treasury Woodin. The reason attributed to him is most significant. It is that a banking bill now would tend to upset the apple cart just as the country is moving back to better days. This is only one more evidence of the utter incapacity of the business man for sound collaboration in government policy. It is impossible for him to divorce himself from these paralyzing fears.

I suggest that we keep our eyes on Mr. Woodin.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

Sur le Lac

The Mask and the Face, by Luigi Chiarelli, translated by Somerset Maugham. Guild Theatre, May 8, 1933.

CATHERINE the Great, asking in dismay what would Monsieur Voltaire think, might shudder indeed at the vapidities of dialogue and sentiment in the new Guild piece; and Lamartine, looking through to the Guild Lake of Como, the intervening garden, water and mountains, might well repeat his *"sombres abîmes, Que faites-vous des jours que vous engloutissez?"* But this essay is not for such high likelihoods or justifications. This is by way of being a sort of Broadway fantasy, since it is written largely for Times Square absentees. It is written for certain readers of The New Republic by whom I may be blest, toward whom I have at least a modest responsibility, and on whom the blessing has fallen not to have seen "The Mask and the Face" at the Guild Theatre or "The Emperor Jones" at the Metropolitan Opera House.

There would, of course, be no reason for taking "The Mask and the Face" seriously merely because it is a Theatre Guild production; certainly the Guild has done nothing this season to warrant any such singling out for attention. The new play at the Guild Theatre ought not, on the other hand, to be roasted out of its insignificance merely because it is produced by the Theatre Guild, since the Guild has done nothing this season to warrant such singling out for attention. The game works both ways. It is only for these readers mentioned above that I make a few points.

In the first place, nobody could understand the Guild's reason for choosing such a play. There must be plenty of worse plays that would be better if done well, which this one is not; and plenty of better plays that would be worse, if done badly, which this one is. It is plainly, therefore, not a case of wishing this fifth and closing production in the series promised Guild subscribers to be as poor as possible. "The Mask and the Face" is an inexpensive play to put on, and the season right and left has not been rich; which might serve for one reason behind such a choice. The only other I can think of is a sort of *jeu d'esprit,* something gay, light and witty to bring the season up to early summer and so to fit the gambol and frisk of our moods. We might let it go at that.

Even these accountings do not hold. The décor that Mr. Lee Simonson has supplied for the play, could not, with the arches, walls, doorways et cetera used, be called extravagantly costly; and certainly any producer has a right to economize on settings nowadays. But the room is in all respects stupid and without distinction, banal and semi-vulgar would be descriptive also; and the scene over and beyond the lake outside is drab and lighted without any sort of imagination or even realistic beauty. The sophistication implied in the drama was not in the room, and the dream and erotics implied in the world outside were not in the scene displayed. None of this is a question of cost; it is a matter of taste and dramatic design—the room, if you were pushed to it, you could turn into one of those bare *saloni* common to Italian villas, with only a few furnishings necessary to the action (a lot of that sitting all over the stage and getting up and going here and there, and spreading out of the personages is only futile and wasteful anyhow); but it must be a *salone* of fine tone and proportion. It is obvious that the drop for the lake and mountains is not a matter of cost.

The lightness of the piece, the wit and so on, are strangely muddled and trite, a kind of itching flatness is about the best to be said for it. And, granting the wit, if such a piece is to be given, the acting should be finished down to the finest line; its gradations, surprises and technical interests should in themselves be a pleasure to us. The playing in "The Mask and the Face" is very poor, a curious amateurish impression. I could not make out quite what this might be. Clearly the playing was far below much to be seen in Broadway productions by producers who make no claims of any sort beyond the box office. I had a sense that these players at the Guild were trying to be better than they are, perhaps. At any rate there were few signs anywhere of a good, buckled-down, honest, professional job, unsupported by a subscription list and scared with the wholesome idea that the first Saturday after the opening might bring the play to an end. As to the play itself, I have not read the Italian version. From what I could guess out of the so-called translation, it may have been meant by its author as a sort of fantastic social comedy moving toward farce of the Pirandello mood, plane, school or genre, as one may choose to put it. About such a play the great difficulty for the director and the company is to catch or create the general tone, a tone, any tone almost, so that the whole hangs together. In this production no one tone was ever achieved; the result was amateurish, unsatisfactory and variously crude.

The play as Mr. Somerset Maugham has given it to us is not worth talking about except to say that the situation (highly social it seems) includes two friends, one of whom has a false wife, much younger, one of whom swears to kill his wife if she betrays him. He finds that she has, finds he cannot carry out his principle, sends her out of the country, pretends he killed her and threw her body into the lake. Defended by his wife's lover, he is freed by the court, a body is fished out of the lake, identified as that of his wife, the funeral nears, and in the midst of it his wife returns, veiled, by way of the lake, and to the sound of the funeral march outside the two find they love each other. Even such a resumé of the story will show the difficulty of finding any tone or plane for the whole of it either in writing or performance. The absence of this in the performance was not wholly surprising, as things go in this world, including Mr. Maugham; we abandon the hope of it. But it seems little to ask that, for example, some re-

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coinings of the Italian names be made, or Giacomo be given the right accent, which is on the *a* and not as if he were the lake's namesake. I have dwelt enough on this final Guild event, I hope, to be of use to various people in their estimate of what the Theatre Guild, with diverse fine credits on its side and its continuously plausible and high description of its policy, can also include.

"The Emperor Jones" opera is a different discussion. Few, I daresay, will exalt the Guild's new piece; but the version of Mr. Eugene O'Neill's famous play that was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House has in many quarters been praised to the skies. There were divergent opinions here and there among critics and newspaper reports, but all in all I saw columns devoted to the new American opera and to Mr. Lawrence Tibbett's acting of the Negro hero of the play. In one very influential review I saw this performance set beside Chaliapin's Boris.

If in a democracy we naturally tend to justify and warm ourselves, this would seem a bad moment to begin it. The music, as Mr. Paul Rosenfeld's review in The New Republic recorded at the time, was negligible. As for the rest, I cannot rest in the grave where that evening laid me until I have recorded what I saw.

In the first place, then: Mr. Tibbett has a beautiful voice, but save for a short spiritual, rather obviously dragged in, he had practically no singing to do; he had almost entirely recitative or straight spoken dialogue, and to him fell most of the lines, as in the play itself. Mr. Tibbett tried hard and monotonously for a Negro voice in this speaking, but got only a certain effect of misplaced tone or of speaking from the wrong place in the throat. As for acting, he had no invention at all; all he could think of to do, in scene after scene, was to run around in circles and fall down in the middle of the stage, in the same spot scene after scene. It was a portrayal of small artistic interest in any direction, least of all technically.

The décor of the opera was, to put it mildly, very poor and unimagined. It was only made worse by a device for choral effects where, amid green leaves on either side of the stage, we saw raised arms and clawing hands. The final setting was beyond words foolish and ugly.

The final scene in the play itself was altered so that a full chorus rushed in, opera style, and carried off the dead hero's body on their shoulders, after a certain amount of ballet prancing and the cheapest of crescendo efforts. The witch doctor—to be taken as the last horror in the primitive climaxes that have followed one another in the Negro's mind—was brought in just before the death, so that all the cumulative drama was lost. And—nobody will believe this—the witch doctor, instead of appearing among the shadows of the stage wood, as the terror of the superstition crept from the shadows of the Negro mind, came up out of the footlights, somewhere near the prompter's box, in the middle of the stage, a silly dancer figure, brightly rigged out like a ballet fantasy!

I can imagine a spectator who, through being entirely unfamiliar with the play (the power of which rests in its theatrical pattern), might be at least interested and in a way impressed by this production at the Metropolitan. Otherwise, except for that pattern, which after all, if you know the play, is half-thwarted by the opera version, there was little to be said. I have spent few evenings so boring, not to speak of the surprise. Since then I have heard many artists and theatregoers and music lovers say the same thing. The Metropolitan's opera of "The Emperor Jones" seems, nevertheless, to have been passed out as a triumph. The performance I saw was one of the last, the second or third from the last. Next morning I read in the newspaper that the performance had been greeted by the same applause and enthusiasm that had characterized the opening night. As a matter of fact, long before the last curtain I saw a good many people leaving, and the final applause, far from being triumphant, was very perfunctory and mild.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Technocracy and the Debt Burden

SIR: Mr. George Soule has been persistently careless in his quotations from the Technocrats and now to misquote with italics for emphasis after so long an opportunity correctly to inform himself, lays Mr. Soule's editorial responsibility open to serious question. He says, in your issue of May 3, that "Howard Scott *did* make the statement that interest absorbed one-half of the national income." The quotation is incorrect and distorts the correct statement in two directions. The correct statement was that "The fixed charges on debt amount to over one-half of the national income (1932)."

The statement was made to indicate the magnitude of our fixed charges and did not infer, as does Mr. Soule, that this portion of our income is deflected from the channels of effective purchasing power. Such an inference is obviously ludicrous to the most casual student of the price system as it operates under the institutions of capitalism. The importance of this fixed charge lies in the fact that unless it is earned or paid, the value of price-system wealth, the debt claims, collapses. When Mr. Soule comes to understand this fact and the relation of this fact to a declining growth rate of physical production, he will get some inkling of the importance of the debt structure as it relates to our present dilemma.

As to the correctness of Mr. Ackerman's statements and their clarity, which Mr. Soule questions, I am in hearty agreement with him that judgment should rest with his informed readers.

DAL HITCHCOCK,
Technical Division, Continental
Committee on Technocracy.

New York City.

SIR: *Re* the communication of Mr. Frederick L. Ackerman in your issue of May 3, Mr. Soule takes issue with Mr. Ackerman by further reiteration of economic formulas, which, did he but understand what the latter was saying, would seem, to say the least, a "foggy" basis indeed for an intelligent controversy. Technocracy has never pretended to form its estimates from "ordinary accounting"; it has ever made it clear that it derives its conclusions from a more scientifically realistic point of view. In addition, Mr. Soule goes out of his way to drag in Mr. Scott—who is not mentioned in Mr. Ackerman's communication—and makes a flagrantly inexcusable misrepresentation of the latter. Mr. Scott's estimate of interest requirements is well known to include all of the items additionally discussed by Mr. Ackerman—the "total debt claims"—and was never intended to be limited by such somewhat too hopeful eliminations as Mr. Soule employed in his discussion. The latter virtually admits this when, after making a gratuitous pass at Mr. Scott, he allows himself to be drawn into a mention at least of the additional items of obsolescence and amortization, etc., even though he discusses them on terms that are mutually exclusive.

It would seem that Mr. Soule is piling up a sorry mass of evidence against himself in the series of rejoinders that he appends to every serious discussion of Technocracy that finds its way into The New Republic. To the analytical, a motive is patently dis-

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coverable. Mild as it seemingly appears, the persistent animus of Mr. Soule toward Technocracy, Mr. Scott and practically everyone else concerned therewith is still being employed to befog the significance of Technocracy's postulates and findings, which, as stated months ago by Dr. Barnes, have not yet been successfully opposed anywhere. The more Mr. Soule, either by statement or inference, denies this, the more evident it is. Febrile professorial chiding, even if based on pardonable failure to comprehend issues raised in the first place by Scott, later by Ward, and now by Ackerman, is a deplorably insufficient method of dealing with a diagnosis, the implications of which Mr. Soule has so far never given tangible evidence of comprehending. . . .

New York City. ALLAN LINCOLN LANGLEY.

[I regret that, as Mr. Hitchcock points out, I represented Mr. Scott, both in the original article and the reply to Mr. Ackerman, as saying that "interest charges" are half the national income, instead of saying that the "fixed charges" on debt add up to more than that amount. Even so, however, the statement was grossly exaggerated. Adding the charges for amortization would not bring the total nearly to one-half. A careful study of "Debts vs. Income," recently released by the Twentieth Century Fund, estimates the "total debt service" as 19.8 percent of the national income, or somewhat less than one-fifth. Mr. Gardiner Means's estimate of the interest burden alone—which was the one used in my article—was about one-seventh.

I did not intend, in the use of the word "absorb," to imply that Mr. Scott was ignorant of the fact that interest is not a diminution of, or a diversion from, the stream of purchasing power. Many persons, however, including some Technocrats, frequently fail to realize the full implication of that fact when discussing the debt burden. Mr. Ackerman, for instance, dismissed it from discussion with the phrase, "well worn formulations of economics."

The article was not written, as the above correspondents assume, to combat the Technocrats—they were only casually mentioned in it, and only twice—but to throw a little light on the nature and seriousness of the debt burden. Surely the Technocrats did not discover, nor are they the only ones to understand, that if the "fixed charge" is not carried or paid, the value of debt claims collapses. The important thing is to know why income shrinks and what to do about it. Until they condescend to offer a program more specific than that we must get rid of "the price system," the rest of us may perhaps be pardoned for seeking further light wherever we can get it.

Since the discussion has wandered so far from the original article, I may be pardoned for repeating a few words from its conclusion: "The trouble is, not that debt in itself is always a burden, but that its volume and price are not intelligently related to the volume and prices of other things in the system. We give private persons and groups a vested interest in the stability of debt prices, while failing to practise equal control over other prices." The obvious conclusion is that the way out lies in social planning and management of production and of the distribution of income, so that people may be able to buy what can be made.—G. S.]

Mr. Selznick and RKO

SIR: In your issue of April 26, 1933, on page 310, you published an article with the signature of Mr. John T. Flynn, in which you say, among other things:

> Again, how much do business men know about business? They know enough to get well paid. Mr. David Selznick ruled over the production of RKO pictures. His modest services were rewarded with $2,500 a week salary. But something happened and Mr. Selznick found himself "off location." His unhappy unemployment situation was promptly dealt with by his father-in-law, Mr. Louis B. Mayer, of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who put him on the pay roll for $4,000 a week. At the moment the movie magnates were trying to induce the stage hands to accept a cut of 50 percent in wages and were about to succeed when Mr. David Selznick's depression salary leaked out. The End.

The clear innuendo in this article is that the services of Mr. Selznick did not justify a salary of $2,500 a week by the RKO; that because he was the son-in-law of Louis B. Mayer, of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, he was put on the pay roll at $4,000 a week. This clearly is a libelous reflection on Mr. Selznick's business ability and worth. . . .

Mr. Selznick was engaged with RKO from about November of 1931 on a one-year contract at $4,500 weekly, as Executive Vice President in Charge of Production, and not at $2,500, as stated in this article. Twenty-five hundred dollars of his salary was to be withheld if the company and Mr. Selznick could not get together on terms for a second year. Negotiations for the second year began during August of 1932, and the executive officers who had the right to make a contract indicated their eagerness to continue Mr. Selznick's services. By the first of January the negotiations had not been concluded. Nevertheless, the $2,500 which was to be withheld was paid to Mr. Selznick as an evidence on the part of the company of its satisfaction with his services and its hope to be able to continue them. In January of 1933 the executive officers of RKO offered Mr. Selznick a contract of $2,500 per week, plus 20 percent of the net profits of the entire program—the percentage of profits to be computed from the period of the expiration of the first year. This would have meant a salary to Mr. Selznick very largely in excess of $4,500 per week. He, however, did not see fit to accept it, thinking that he would be in a better position to exercise his talents and render service to the community by accepting the contract tendered him by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, which was a salary of only $4,000 per week. His relationship to Mr. Mayer in no wise entered into the negotiations.

New York City. MAX D. STEUER.

Extracts from Letters

J. B. N. CARDOZA, New York City, says that "the main argument against high-velocity dated stamped scrip is that it imposes a heavy tax on banks and merchants on stamp day. In my recommendation to the American Bankers' Association I suggested that all payments be made by actual physical transfer by the Railway Express Agency. This method eliminates the banks and removes the argument brought up in John Chamberlain's article on inflation [The New Republic, May 3]. . . . After A.B.A. dated stamped scrip has brought general business back to normal and the last piece of scrip has been paid off and destroyed, the majority of the unemployed will again be absorbed by regular business."

J. Thoen, Ponca City, Oklahoma, writes to suggest a solution of the banking question: "Let the federal government establish in every post office a banking department for savings and checking accounts only. Let the business be self-supporting, paying such interest on savings accounts as will enable the government to make a small profit, say, 3 to 4 percent. No interest on the checking accounts, possibly a small fee to be charged the depositor."

Frances Strauss, manager, The Workers' Music Olympiad, 55 West Nineteenth Street, New York City, announces three music contests as part of the first American Workers' Music Olympiad, to be held Sunday, May 21, in the auditorium of City College, New York City, under the auspices of the Workers' Music League, United States Section of the International Music Bureau. The Olympiad will be divided into three concerts: one for children, one for the presentation of new proletarian music of the United States and Russia, and one for workers' choruses.

John W. Woelfle, secretary of the New Jersey Housing League, writes to express the League's appreciation and approval of the article by Harold S. Buttenheim in The New Republic of May 10.

James Garnet, secretary of the Provisional Teachers' Anti-War Committee, writes in to say that his organization, the American Committee for Struggle against War and the New York Student Committee for Struggle against War will hold a conference at 7:30 p.m., May 19, at the Community Church, 550 West One Hundred and Tenth Street, New York City.

Miss Hilda W. Smith, director of the Affiliated Schools for Workers, 302 East Thirty-fifth Street, New York City, sends an announcement of the College Conference to be held at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry during the Fourth of July week-end this summer. During this week-end, middle class students will have a chance to come into contact with the work done at the Bryn Mawr Summer School.

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Education and Politics

The Educational Frontier, edited by W. H. Kilpatrick. New York: The Century Company. 331 pages. $2.50.

THERE are more than a million teachers in the United States. They constitute, if not the most numerous, certainly the most influential group among the professional classes of the country. They do not merely impart the knowledge and techniques necessary to keep production going; they inculcate the values, attitudes and ideals which become part of the natural, unreflective behavior of millions upon millions of young Americans. If teachers have been unaware of the extent to which they have molded the minds of the rising generations, it is because they have been unaware of the extent to which their own minds have been molded by their social experience or lack of it. In times of relative social stability, the presuppositions and ideology of the existing order appear to them to be axiomatic. But in periods of social transition when the old conditions of effective teaching have broken down and the new have not yet appeared, when their own vocational status and security are threatened, teachers become more critical of the accepted objectives of educational activity, more sensitive to the currents of reaction or revolution which catch school, student and home life in their swirling wake, and less timid of administrative frowns and the academic totem pole of "good taste."

The role of the school teacher in the Fascizing of Italy and Germany is probably the most interesting of the unwritten chapters of these movements. The role of the American teacher in the social changes of today and tomorrow is not yet clear. But as the newspapers so eloquently document, he is on the move. More accurately he is being moved—moved by slashing retrenchments in the educational budget, by the piling up of teaching burdens which flow from increased pupil loads, by payless pay days, by attempts to convert the schools, at the teacher's expense, into relief stations, by efforts to circumvent tenure rights and by increasing restrictions upon academic freedom.

By far the most progressive and significant statement of the new educational philosophy which is emerging from the depression is "The Educational Frontier"—a collaborative product of Professors Bode, Childs, Dewey, Hullfish, Kilpatrick, Raup and Thayer. This book does two things. It offers a penetrating socio-economic analysis of the present crisis in educational theory and practice; and more important, restates, develops and defends the philosophy of experimentalism as a basis for immediate social action. No follower or critic of the experimental philosophy can afford to neglect this radical reformulation of the position of America's leading educators.

For almost a generation current educational theory in this country has given lip service to a social conception of education. According to this conception, the activities of the school were to be continuously integrated with the activities of society while the educational process itself was to be concerned not only with the transmission of culture but with its critical reconstruction. Educational practice, however, fell far short of these ideals. Indeed, the pious aspirations of the new social philosophy were used as a camouflage for the old anti-social practices. Despite the change in jargon, the forms of schooling produced no real integration with the outside world, failed to eliminate the sense of unreality which pervaded the lowest and highest divisions of education, retained emphasis upon the practical ideals of self-advancement, resorted to the anti-social techniques of competitive awards, cluttered up the curriculum with narrowly practical business courses and narrowly impractical cultural courses, and fostered, at almost every point, a chauvinistic nationalism. The only country in which the ideal of the new educational theory—the development of creative, socially integrated personalities—was adopted, was Communist Russia. With some important modifications, to be sure.

Why did the social philosophy of education become a kind of pink icing upon existing anti-social school practices? Professor Dewey supplies the answer. First, it was conceived without reference to the specific problems of a specific society existing at a specific time and place. Second, the cultural and inertial lag of educational practices which had their source either in the agrarian leisure-class ideal of the "cultivated gentleman" or in the American pioneer tradition of "self-help," prevented a wider realization of the impact of industry, science and technology upon social life. Third, the social ideals of contemporary economic society "are directly antagonistic to the social ideals professed in [experimental] educational philosophy."

The authors of "The Educational Frontier" consequently set themselves the task of making more explicit and more concrete the social philosophy involved in their theory of education. They frankly avow the democratic ideal, "the right of every person to realize his potential capacities," to be their basic educational principle. In stressing the interactive, social character of education, the experimental philosophy does not deny but affirms the intrinsic value of individuality. It points out that the widest opportunities for creative experience—both private and shared—are furthered by some forms of social organization and hampered by others. The easy, uncritical positing of the *social* against the *individual* is, therefore, inadmissible. Every society has its own conception of individuality. The social opportunities for expanding creative experience can only be given by a planned and planning society in which the experimental method is brought to bear for the first time upon all difficulties and problems. But can the experimental method be applied in any or every society? Dewey's answer runs:

> The objective precondition of the complete and free use of the method of intelligence is a society in which class interests that recoil from social experimentation are abolished. It is incompatible with every social and political philosophy and activity and with every economic system which accepts the class organization and vested class interest of present society.

The philosophy of experimental education, then, demands the existence of the classless society. But by its own logic the experimental philosophy cannot stop with a proclamation of an ideal. "A goal cannot be intelligently set forth apart from the path which leads to it."

It is in the discussion of the means by which the classless society is to be achieved that the new educational philosophy reveals its greatest advance and its greatest shortcomings. The advance consists in making emphatic, to a point which ought forever to silence its professional misunderstanders, that the experimental method which it uses cannot be identified with opportunism or with sweet reasonableness.

> As far as experience and reflection indicate that pacific measures are most likely to be effective, the philosophy is pacifist; where the reverse is indicated by the best available knowledge of actual conditions, it is revolutionary.

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This goes a long way but still not far enough. The real educational question of the moment is: how is the transition from a class to a classless society to be brought about? The answer, it seems to me, need not take us so far afield from the professional predicament in which teachers find themselves today and out of which this volume arose. Indeed, some of the points in the argument for the politicalization of the philosophy of education are made by the authors themselves. The argument may be stated in the form of theses.

1. The specific economic disabilities from which the educational system of our country suffers—retrenchment all along the line, discontinuance of educational services, overcrowding in classrooms—as well as the pressure under which the teacher labors to make his educational activity subserve the cults of nationalism, political conformity and cultural orthodoxy, are directly traceable to the organic processes of capitalist production and the needs of those classes who wield the dominant political power within it.

2. Since under the present order, the conditions of effective teaching are beyond the control of the teachers, they must organize for a fundamental transformation of the social system.

So much is admitted by the authors of "The Educational Frontier." The next point they will also grant.

3 The economic and cultural difficulties of all other producing groups in the country—the workers, farmers and professionals—flow from the same basic factors which are at the source of the teacher's predicament.

4. Since their interests are common, the teachers of the country must align themselves with the workers, farmers and professionals—the parents of the children they teach—in a common struggle for a collectivist society.

5. This struggle cannot succeed unless it assumes a political form and expresses itself in a political organization; the immediate goal of such a movement must be the establishment of a government of, by and for producers, to initiate and enforce the necessary measures towards collectivism.

6. Political power has never passed from the hands of one class to another without class struggles; if the classless society is to be achieved, it is not by closing one's eyes to existing class struggles but by prosecuting them more widely and vigorously and intelligently.

SIDNEY HOOK.

Eakins: The Painter at Work

Thomas Eakins: His Life and Work, by Lloyd Goodrich. New York: Studio Publications. 225 pages and 73 plates. $10.

THE PHILADELPHIANS in the 1900's asked Sargent whom to have to dine. When he suggested, "There's Eakins, for instance," they replied, "And who is Eakins?" For ten years, everybody had said, "Eakins is a butcher," because, forsooth, first in 1875 and again in 1889 he had exhibited big paintings of clinics with blood on the surgeons' hands. The Academy slighted them. Eakins quoted Pantagruel, "You make me laugh. I know how nuns are not so scared of breaking God's laws as of transgressing provincial customs." Who was Eakins? Perhaps a lady here or there joined the name with him who had once said, "You have a nice back, much like that of a boy. I should like to paint you naked," and to whom she replied, "Well, I shall ask my mother, and see."—"I would not sit for Eakins," Edwin Abbey confessed, "because he would bring out all the traits of my character that I have been trying to hide from the public for years." Walt Whitman knew who Eakins was, knew he had painted the best portrait of him. Yet even Whitman did not know how to give an account of the man beyond calling him a "force." And Philadelphia society always had to be reminded about him. Was he the Eakins who had been dismissed as director of several art schools because of his habit of removing the loin cloth from the model?

Eakins once said to some reporters, "For the public, I believe that my life is all in my work." Lloyd Goodrich's biography is formed by this sentiment and is constructed with Eakins' own regard for the truth. Although it is brief, the reader feels that he has lived day by day through the sequence of canvas after canvas to which the painter devoted himself. The critic's understanding of them is faultless, except possibly for what I think is a mere bundling of the names, Thomas Eakins and Winslow Homer with Albert Ryder.

What is most striking in Goodrich's catalogue of all the known works is the high proportion that are lost or known to have been destroyed. What is most striking in the text are the painter's own observations upon art and life. They form an important contribution to that predominant part of American literature which is not written by "men of letters," and which must be widely known before our culture can be judged. But by "work" Eakins did not mean his words. Nor did he refer to the years during which his powerful fellow citizens set him to teaching art (just as the Bostonians dealt with another frustrate sculptor, Dr. Rimmer). Eakins' life is in his work and his work is mostly portraiture: of family life, of indoor and outdoor sport, of working scientists and musicians; portraits which, as the sitters grew older, grew to look more like them every day: portraits of hard, close business men, and of disappointed women.

Eakins, not Sargent, is the biographer of his times. The subtle interplay between subject matter and form shaped his work. Sargent's subject is only social position. Eakins' is social environment, and the greater subject, once he had trained his eye and mind, enforced the greater art. Concentrating upon the characteristics which made each sitter like no other in the world, Eakins recorded with remorseless truth the world which pressed upon them all. Today his sitters are neighbors who have less to say about themselves than about each other. It is a sorry tale they tell. In order to draw it from them, Eakins returned again and again to autopsy and trigonometry. Whether society disgraced or honored him, he kept on working harder year by year up to the day he went blind and had to quit his three-hundred-and-thirtieth work: a doctor holding in his hands the plaster cast of a human brain.

Eakins came from working-class people. When asked about art lectures for their uplift, he replied: "The working people from their close contact with physical things are apt to be . . . acute critics of the structural quality of pictures. . . . In my own case I have not yet found time to examine the Academy exhibit and would be puzzled indeed to tell anybody why most of the pictures were painted."

This is a piece of sturdy thought. Here are tools to hand to break out of the middle-class jail. The tools lay unused. While the solitary Winslow Homer found with woodsmen and fisherfolk at once his subject matter and his ideal public, Eakins, a gregarious city dweller, never found his. Neither with sitters nor with public was he ever at peace. Just one step more around the corner from his studio and he would have found whom he needed—the industrial workers of Philadelphia.

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT.

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Sex Emancipated

Psychology of Sex: A Manual for Students, by Havelock Ellis. New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. 389 pages. $3.

THIS "MANUAL," intended primarily for students of medicine, should prove equally welcome to students generally and, beyond them, to all intelligent people. What we have before us is not a book of the scholarship of "Studies in the Psychology of Sex" or of the literary grace of "The Dance of Life," but in one sense a work that represents a more difficult achievement than either. Ellis has here produced a popular book on a difficult and ticklish subject without sacrificing either accuracy or dignity. There are no technicalities (barring some unavoidable "terms" which are explained at the end of the book), but the book has all the qualities of a scientific text except dullness. It would not be too much to say that "The Psychology of Sex" is at the height of the English tradition in such matters and should become a classic in company with Huxley's "Man's Place in Nature" and Russell's "The ABC of the Atom."

While fully recognizing the weight of physiology in psychological problems, the author departs from the materialists in stressing the autonomy of the psychic. He pays his compliments to the ductless glands—especially the pituitary, that "leader of the endocrine orchestra"—but insists that "an emotion remains an emotion, alike whether a hormone or a chalone has on the physical side taken part in its production." The attitude is maintained throughout. With justifiable insistence Ellis underlines the relativity of the abnormal. This principle, a commonplace of science since Virchow's "Cellular Pathology," deserved emphasis especially in the field of sex. The very term "perversions" savors of moralistic as well as clinical snobbishness. "The term is completely antiquated and mischievous," we are told, "and should be avoided." There is no breach of continuity between the attitude of a loving woman who says "I could eat you!" and the abominations of a Jack-the-Ripper.

The sections on children are a veritable catechism of "what a young mother should know." There is a well deserved slam at Freud's reference to a child as "polymorphous perverse." "The real perversity would be if the young thing were to exhibit the shape of that which is fully grown." Ellis concludes that "it is few mothers, but the best, that humanity now needs." "Sexual guidance of children should begin, so far as its elements are concerned, at a very early age. . . . A wise and tender mother is the ideal person to perform this really maternal duty . . . without carrying her information further than the child's curiosity at the time demands."

The art of living, as the author neatly puts it, lies in a fine balance of expression and repression. The former requires freedom, the latter discipline. There is an important insight here: "The people who best discipline children and teach them self-control are other children." And again: "From the earliest age there begins the formation of self-discipline and self-control, and it may most naturally and most wholesomely arise in that life among equals for which all education that is worth anything is the training ground."

Marriage, that black sheep of radical sexology, Ellis treats without either sentimentality or cynicism. First of all, I may add, the author accepts it as the dominant though not exclusive mode of sex relationship for today and tomorrow. He even accepts monogamy, if properly understood and lived. With Exner, he regards "psychologic marriage" as "an achievement between mates." An achievement implies a task, thus excluding the notion of marriage as either casual or easy. At the same time the implied "tension" need not be "tragic," as with Keyserling. Here an ultimate purpose, an ideal to live for together, is as important as the art of loving. As to the latter, Ellis knows his husbands! He does not hesitate to ascribe to them the "frigidity" of so many wives. Following Balzac, Ellis compares an ignorant, selfish or insensitive husband to an orang-outang with a violin: "The violin remains 'anesthetic,' but it is probably not the violin's fault."

In matters of sex we have traveled far in the past hundred years, and have gone a long way beyond the view of the English surgeon, Acton, who believed that "to attribute sexual feelings to women was 'a vile aspersion.'" We may travel even further—for the spaces ahead are vast—in the next hundred years, if "The Psychology of Sex" can be taken as a sign of the times. Books such as this are calculated to lighten that journey.

ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER.

The More It Changes

Economics of a Changing World, by H. V. Hodson. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 277 pages. $2.50.

TWO CLAIMS are made for this book. The jacket describes it as a guide for intelligent readers with "little or no previous acquaintance with economics"; and Sir Arthur Salter, who writes the Introduction, goes farther and declares that Mr. Hodson has made significant contributions to the building of a more dynamic science. "His," he says, "are the economics of change."

For the former task, the author has distinct qualifications. Between his first sentence, which compares the economist to "the subject of a *succès de scandale*," and his last, which looks hopefully out of depression to a time "when we shall be both able and content to be rich," there are many happy turns of phrase, and in a number of cases they serve to bring clarity to the statement of complex phenomena. This is notably true of the paragraphs that tell how Germany paid reparations, and the book was not long off the press before Americans had occasion to applaud the argument that a central monetary authority should have "the power to induce any and every member of the community's banking system to restrict or relax its terms of credit, the ability to distinguish . . . between the different uses of credit . . . and some measure of control over international lending." But quite as often the author seems to have elaborated the more arid distinctions of theory without asking himself what use the general reader would make of them; and it is hard to see why the latter should be informed that "the curve of hedonist well-being" with rising income "tends to be asymptotic to the horizontal axis"!

Professional economists, also, will suspect from the last quotation that Mr. Hodson's approach to the subject is not so new after all. It is true that the book is packed with references to concrete modern phenomena and that its major theme is the problem of business fluctuations. The analysis of the disturbances caused by "the sudden failure of international investment" is particularly vigorous, and economists will be interested to note that the Keynesian distinction between investment and saving is applied throughout. But out of all this emerges little sign of a new

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dynamics. The nearest approach to major generalization is the argument that "either the self-righting economic forces must be allowed much freer play than at present . . . or the congregation of individual wills must be still further controlled." Yet it is not the author but Sir Arthur Salter who goes on from this to the conclusion that "we must place private enterprise within a more skillful framework of control and planning"; and to this "distinctive and fundamental task" Mr. Hodson's two hundred and seventy pages offer less of a contribution than Sir Arthur's five.

The reason is not hard to find. It lies in the restrictions imposed upon the author by his modesty and by his traditionalism. The scientist as such must have no judgments of policy; it is nothing to him whether or not a man gets what he deserves or "wants what he pays for"; and as economist, therefore, he cannot choose between communism and capitalism or even between rival systems of taxation. Nor is this all. Even in objective analysis, he must be careful not to explore "territory foreign to [his] subject." Thus it is not his business (even in a book which blames instalment selling for helping to bring on the depression) to ask *why* the consumer demands what he does. It is vexing that "the facts about which the economist has to reason are constantly being changed by non-economic (mainly political) forces"; but there is really nothing he can do about it. "The economic machine" is one thing and "the political machine" is a totally different one. To insist on these distinctions, however, is virtually to rule institutions out of the subject. Yet since they are just the things which most persistently refuse to remain the same, this means giving up the very possibility of a real "economics of change." There is no doubt that it is a "changing world" about which Mr. Hodson writes. But as for economic theory—so long as it accepts these limitations—the more it changes, the more it remains the same thing.

CARTER GOODRICH.

Book Notes

AMERICANA

EARLY SONGS OF UNCLE SAM, by George Stuyvesant Jackson. *Introduction by Kenneth B. Murdoch. Boston: Bruce Humphries. 297 pages. $5.*

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Travel and Adventure

IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AMERICA, by André Siegfried. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 200 pages. $2.*

In the summer of 1931 Professor Siegfried completed a journey through South America. This small book is made up of letters he wrote on the way, and is illustrated by photographs and by Ione Robinson's strange and slight pen drawings. Professor Siegfried is at his best when he is feeling out the class currents of this continent of violent geographic and human contrasts. In every country he saw the state power in the hands of local or foreign capital and maintained by force. The political future of the South American countries he sees dependent on the creation of middle classes that may control reckless loan-makers and fickle machine guns.

ISLANDS UNDER THE WIND, by Hassoldt Davis. *New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 278 pages. $2.50.*

Hassoldt Davis left San Francisco to find out what the hot climates contained. He made the modern grand tour: Tahiti, the Celebes, Bali, Singapore and return. He immediately penetrated foreign ways of living and almost slipped past his color in his contacts with the natives. Contrasts between European maladjustment and tropical serenity are described with skill.

THE LAND OF PROMISE, by Edmond Fleg. *New York: The Macaulay Company. 256 pages. $2.*

Edmond Fleg's emotional power as a French historian has made his books clear and true illuminations of Jewish tradition and conscience. Before the writing of "The Land of Promise" he had decided to write a life of Christ and had set out for Palestine. As he steamed down to Egypt and traveled overland he felt his excitement changing direction as it increased. "I was afraid," he says, "that I should find myself a stranger there; afraid also, that I might feel myself at home." Intending to write of the time of the old Jews, he found the Judea of the Zionists taking over his mind, his pen, and threatening to take over his whole life. He saw the land and talked with those who are struggling with it and with each other. He tried to understand the hearts of the Zionists and of the Arabs. Answers did not come easily. In the process of discovering his change of heart, he has made a very real picture of life in Palestine.

Fiction

THE MIDST OF LIFE, by Mina Curtiss. *Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $1.90.*

This series of letters is worked out from the deepest of all experiences, for they are addressed to a man who has died. They are extraordinary letters, for they exclude all those subjects which have no true animation and hence no appeal to the dead. They are written with a grief that has kept itself fine and intense through the years, by a sorrowful woman who has courage enough to try to wring a living, in the spiritual sense, from the patrician simplicities left to her after the death: fine-bred dogs and horses, garden, friends. Letters which can never be postmarked require some peculiar quality; these are deeply moving in dignity and beauty.

SON OF EARTH, by Howard Erickson. *New York: The Dial Press. $2.*

This is the story of a Danish-born farm lad in Iowa who strives to deracinate himself so that he can become thoroughly Americanized and successful according to the standards of the new world. Tolf, the protagonist, breaks his ties with his own people and accepts employment on the farm of a native American. He meets with humiliation at every turn. The final blow comes when the sister-in-law of his employer unfeelingly jilts him. He becomes a drunken loafer. In a final effort to rehabilitate himself, he returns to his own kind. He marries the Danish girl whom he has previously spurned, hoping that she will deed him

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the farm she has inherited. She treats him as a mere hired hand. He is left with only one solace—the hope that his children will own their own land and be genuine Americans. "Son of Earth" is a simple and moving first novel.

Contributors

FRANK WHITSON FETTER, an assistant professor of Economics in Princeton University, was one of the contributors to "Facing the Facts: An Economic Diagnosis by Twelve Princeton Professors," published last year.

BORIS ISRAEL, who has traveled extensively throughout the country as correspondent for the Federated Press, has contributed to various magazines and was editor of Nativity: An American Quarterly.

SIDNEY HOOK, an assistant professor of Philosophy at New York University and a lecturer at the New School for Social Research, recently published "Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx" under the imprint of the John Day Company. He is at present at work on a book to be entitled "From Hegel to Marx."

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT has contributed poems and art and literary criticism to various magazines.

ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER, professor of Thought and Culture at the University of Oregon, is the author of several volumes on anthropology, two of the most recent being, "Robots or Gods" and "History, Psychology and Culture," both of which were published by Alfred A. Knopf.

CARTER GOODRICH is a member of the graduate faculty in Economics at Columbia University.

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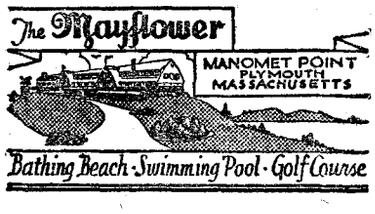

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